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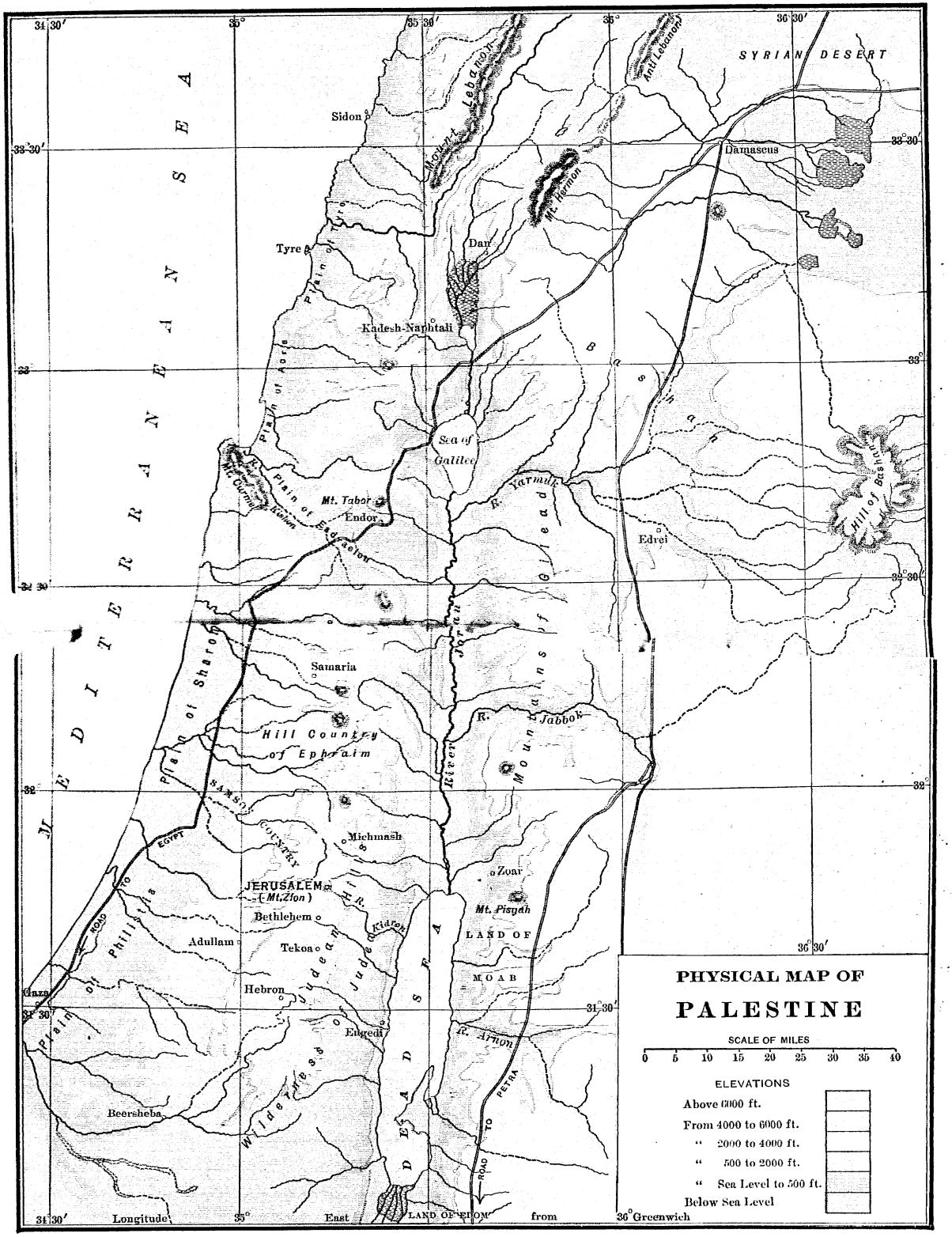
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PHYSICAL MAP OF PALESTINE

SCALE OF MILES

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ELEVATIONS

- Above 6000 ft.
- From 4000 to 6000 ft.
- " 2000 to 4000 ft.
- " 500 to 2000 ft.
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GEOGRAPHIC INFLUENCES IN OLD TESTAMENT MASTERPIECES

BY

LAURA H. WILD

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IN LAKE ERIE COLLEGE

GINN AND COMPANY

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TO

THE FRIEND

WHOSE COUNSEL AND ENCOURAGEMENT

HAVE BEEN THE CONSTANT INSPIRATION OF MY WORK

PREFACE

It is not the purpose of this book to teach the geography, history, or nature study of Palestine in detail, but rather to give illustrations of how Old Testament literature is interpreted through the geography, history, botany, and zoölogy of the land in which it was written. Every one should know something of these subjects. There is no better way to impress these great facts upon our minds than to connect them with the poetic outbursts they have inspired in great authors, and nowhere did nature seem to have a more impressive effect upon the mind of man than in Palestine, becoming a necessary part of the expression of his soul. We lost all that during the Middle Ages. Not until the time of Wordsworth and his contemporaries did the great nature poets begin to appear in the West. To-day in our public schools we are trying to teach our youth to come close to the very heart of life by drawing close to nature. It is fitting, then, that we should go back to the great nature poets of Hebrew literature to help us on our way, for "true poetry has always come back to the realities of Nature and life," and some of the world's greatest masterpieces are to be found in the Old Testament. We are beginning to show appreciation of this fact by introducing the Bible as literature into many of our schools,[1] but

[1] See recommendation of the Committee on College Requirements; also the North Dakota Plan, *Biblical World*, June, 1913, and "Academic

a real interpretation of these masterpieces is utterly impossible without some knowledge of the land itself — without, figuratively speaking, breathing the same atmosphere which inspired the author. The two things, then, work together: a knowledge of the nature of the land interprets the literature, and the literature interprets our knowledge of all nature and life.

The selections included in this little book are illustrative of some of the main geographical features of Palestine which affected the life of the people so strongly. Most of them are great poems or stories depicting historical events. They introduce some of the forms of literature peculiar to the Hebrews and of which their great writers were such unconscious masters. They also touch upon botany and zoölogy, the nature study with which these Hebrew poets were saturated and which reveals the everyday life of the people.

The text quoted unless otherwise indicated is the American Revised Version. The special translations inserted are taken from many scholars. They are not meant as a substitute for our familiar versions, but rather to illumine the passages by looking at the original Hebrew in the light of the gifted scholarship of our day. Any version — the King James, the Revised, the Douay, or the Jewish translation of the Hebrew Scriptures — will serve for the use of the students.

Credit for Bible Study," *The Independent*, March 9, 1914; also a statement of the Colorado Plan, the Gary Plan, the New York City Plan, the Pennsylvania Plan, the Pittsburg Plan, the Australian Plan, and the Saskatchewan Plan in the *Twentieth Century Quarterly*, September, 1914. This Quarterly is edited by Dr. Wilbur F. Crafts, Washington, D.C. See also "The Biblical Knowledge of High School Students," *Religious Education*, August, 1914.

I am indebted to Professor Irving F. Wood of Smith College, Miss Harriet L. Keeler, formerly of the Cleveland public schools, and Dr. Washington Gladden for their kindness in reading the manuscript and encouraging its publication; also to Dr. Margaret L. Bailey of Smith College for assistance in proofreading.

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PAINESVILLE, OHIO

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GEOGRAPHIC INFLUENCES IN OLD TESTAMENT MASTERPIECES

PART I

THE GEOGRAPHIC INFLUENCES

One of the greatest educators of our country, the man who has done more than any other to call our attention to the scientific study of the needs of our youth, calls the Bible our "pedagogical masterpiece."[1] All teachers who are familiar with the book know this to be true, that from a teacher's standpoint, that of the art of presenting material, it is most illuminating. They know also that modern scholarship has thrown such a flood of light upon Hebrew literature that the Old Testament especially is rightfully regarded as containing some of the finest examples of story, poetry, and oratory that the world possesses. No less a writer than Mr. Edmund Gosse says that when young men come to him for advice in the formation of style he has no counsel for them except to read aloud as often as possible portions of the Bible. No less a teacher than one of our professors of English in

[1] President G. Stanley Hall.

Yale University in trying to show his students how to write an essay or prepare a speech or tell a story sends them to the Scriptures to find out how, and points to the many noted men of letters who have "learned their trade in great part from the English Bible." He says their case differs only in degree from that of the plain people, and "since the easiest of books to have at hand has been found in the experience of so many and so different men the best of models for learning how to write, it cannot be set aside without folly." And one of the professors of English in Harvard University, in speaking of the Old Testament, says "it has preserved for us the history, the poetry, the wisdom, the religious ideals and national hopes of a people whose individuality and tenacity of thought are perhaps the strongest known in history"; and he adds that its poetry is "marked by a singular concreteness and objectivity both of idea and of idiom, and by a freedom of form otherwise unknown in English."

Since these statements concerning the value of the Bible as a textbook are undoubtedly not in the least exaggerated, it seems unpardonable to debar our children from its acquaintance as great literature. Furthermore, these recent years have revolutionized the teaching of geography, so that this subject is now considered quite worthy of place in our universities as well as in our secondary schools, so much has it to do with the development of life, both in the past and in the present. Our great geographers have been busy turning the light of their particular science upon every country of the earth, and they have not omitted the little territory of Palestine. The most recent geographical investigations show this tiny strip of land to be one of the

most remarkable portions of the earth's surface, a representation in miniature of what has been spread over whole continents elsewhere. But the land and the literature of the land are inextricably bound together. It is my purpose to show that we are depriving our children of one of the greatest source books of education when we cut them off from an acquaintance with the land of Palestine and the literature of the Old Testament, and that a most legitimate aid to the study of literature and geography in general is the study of some of the great Old Testament masterpieces against the geographical background which forms their setting.

From the broader standpoint we are only beginning to appreciate fully the value and interest of this branch of knowledge. The ancients understood the necessity of a crude geography in order to conduct their trade and make the discoveries which the more adventurous among them dared to undertake; and though much of it was guesswork, which has had to be revised with the more accurate knowledge of the world, their geographical guesses led to great things—the discovery of continents, the migration of races, the establishment of great empires, the onward progress of civilization. The geography of to-day is not guesswork because there is now very little of the earth's surface that is unexplored, and because with the advance of science we have so much more accurate means of drawing maps and picturing the relative importance of various localities. But it is nevertheless of great interest to us to read of the geographical guess of Columbus, who stumbled on America when he thought he was going to find India, or to discover in the country just east of the Dead Sea a mosaic map of

the Eastern world laid out in the ground hundreds of years ago.[1] This is the oldest known map in the world. It is made of squares of stone of various colors — red, yellow, blue, black, and white — and represents Palestine, the Nile Valley, and the surrounding countries. Bridges, fish, beasts, and men, as well as mountains, rivers, and cities, are depicted. There is not much left of the animals now but legs and tails. However, an antelope may be seen intact, as well as palm trees in the hot valleys. This proves that the ancient geographers felt, as we do, that we should have pictures in our minds not only of the topography of a land (where the water ends and the plains and mountains begin), and of the distance between cities, but also of the things that live there, the kind of animals and plants as well as men.

Modern geography, however, goes much further than this. It asks "why" of everything it places upon the map. Why, for example, did the great steel company choose to place its city at the precise spot which is called Gary, Indiana? Why do the great trunk lines of our continent all focus at Chicago? Why is the city of Buenos Aires growing so rapidly and magnificently? Why are many ruins of ancient buildings found on the Upper Nile and comparatively few in the Delta? Why has the little country of Palestine played so important a part in the development of the religious life of the world? Many of these "whys" have to do with the development of commerce, and as this is a commercial age, we are having commercial geography introduced very generally into our schools. But modern geography is by no means wholly utilitarian, it is more of a

[1] Ellsworth Huntington, Palestine and its Transformation, pp. 205 ff.

science than that would signify. We want to know the answers to these questions because they are vitally connected with our understanding of history, the story of the life of the world in the past as well as in the present day.

Palestine is a wonderful country to study from the modern geographical standpoint. There are several reasons for this. In the first place, it is a very small country, only about one hundred and fifty miles north and south by one hundred east and west if we include the plateau east of the Jordan, which properly belongs to its history. This is about the size of our little states of Vermont or New Jersey, and yet within that small territory we have the most varied scenery and the most varied climate in the world. Think of starting on a journey across the state of Vermont some day and on the Lake Champlain side looking out upon a plain covered with palm trees, apricots and figs, oranges and peaches, and fields of flowers, with the temperature of southern France; then climbing low rounded hills, dipping down into a valley and ascending a high mountain, three thousand feet above the level of the sea, where the natives dress in sheepskin and live in warm stone huts; then making a quick, sharp dip down into a torridly hot valley, with the thermometer in May standing from 104° to 114° Fahrenheit, where the thinnest of clothes only are endurable; then rising again to the plateau beyond, where cool breezes and heavy dews make blankets at night desirable. This would be like crossing from the Mediterranean Sea near Joppa over the foothills and up Mount Zion, down into the Jordan Valley and up again to the Plateau of Moab. Or if one stood upon Mount Carmel, the one conspicuous promontory which juts out a little north of the middle of

the coast line, and looked northeast, there would be the snow-capped Mount Hermon, the Pike's Peak of Palestine, standing nine thousand feet above the sea, with the hills of Galilee beneath, the grainfields of the Valley of Jezreel to the east, and, swinging around to the south, the beautiful fertile Plain of Sharon lying at one's feet dotted with fruit trees and with red anemones which sprinkle the landscape with color. California, as one travels from Los Angeles to Sacramento and from the Pacific Coast to the Sierras, is said to be more like Palestine than any other country in the world, so far as the differences in climate and landscape are concerned;[1] but California covers a very much larger territory, — more than ten times as large,[2] — and so Palestine has the distinction of giving us the most compressed and kaleidoscopic view of the landscapes and climates which the world contains.

The second reason why Palestine is a remarkable country to study is from the geological standpoint. Geology is more or less involved in geography, just as botany and zoölogy are. The land we live upon — the soil, the rocks, the mountains and valleys — has a history. Some portions of land are much older than others and show the effects of age and can tell tales that younger places know nothing about. Now Palestine can tell a very old story of the earth's appearance above the sea some thirty thousand years ago[3] and of the gradual changes that took place until

[1] Huntington, Palestine and its Transformation.

[2] California has an area of 158,000 square miles, and Greater Palestine of only 12,000. Thus California is fully thirteen times as large as Palestine.

[3] Huntington, Palestine and its Transformation, p. 307. This is the average of the various estimates of geologists concerning the lapse of time since the close of the last glacial period in Palestine.

it was fit for men to live upon some five or six thousand years ago — of great glaciers that rubbed and scratched and melted, of mighty volcanic eruptions that tore the rocks up by the roots, and of the folding of the earth's crust into hills and valleys, forming watersheds and river basins and lakes and seas, leaving mountains and plateaus high and dry, and causing rich, fertile soil to be washed down upon the plains. Palestine is a wonderful country geologically for three reasons; first, because it contains within such a small area almost all the different kinds of formations which the earth assumes — plain, plateau, sand hill, desert and snow-clad peaks, river valley and mountain gorge, marshes, bodies of fresh water and salt water, hot springs and sulphur springs, steep escarpments and howling wilderness, caves for robbers, pillars of salt, volcanic craters, chalk, limestone, sandstone, a forbidding coast line, and one semblance of a harbor. What greater variety could one ask for? Moreover, while the top layers of sandstone, limestone, and chalk are geologically young, there are very ancient granite rocks near at hand, and it was one of the very first portions of the earth's surface to get settled into shape fit for man and beast.[1] It has, therefore, a longer story to tell than most lands.

In the third place, it contains the most wonderful valley known anywhere on the earth's surface, a valley which starts up in the Lebanon Mountains with the sources of the Jordan River, widening out into marshes with a tiny lake called Lake Huleh, and then a little farther down forming

[1] Townsend MacCoun, The Holy Land in Geography and History; Canon Tristram, Natural History of the Bible; C. F. Kent, Biblical Geography and History; Elihu Grant, The Peasantry of Palestine.

the harp-shaped Sea of Galilee with its clear, blue, fresh water. The outlet of the Sea of Galilee is the River Jordan, which winds down to the Dead Sea, "a sparkling serpent writhing in a barren desert, with only here and there an oasis of deepest green." The distance the Jordan traverses from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea is only about sixty miles in an air line, but the river is so winding that its course measures two hundred miles. The Sea of Galilee at its lower end sinks down very rapidly. Where the Jordan River finds its exit its channel is six hundred and fifty feet below the level of the ocean, and by the time it reaches the Dead Sea the gorge is twelve hundred and seventy-eight feet below sea level. When one finds land below sea level anywhere, it is a phenomenon to be specially noted, but almost thirteen hundred feet below is heard of only in the little country of Palestine. "No other part of the earth's land surface sinks much over three hundred feet below the level of the sea; there may be something on the surface of another planet to match the Jordan Valley — there is nothing on this."[1] The gorge is especially peculiar; geologists think it is not due to the rift cut deep in the rock by the flowing stream, as most valleys are made, but to the original folding of the earth's crust, which left this deep trench to be filled in by the water washing down from above.[2] Moreover the Dead Sea, which is the terminus of this valley, has no outlet; it receives all the waters from the Jordan and the smaller streams on the east which flow into it, but there is no stream which flows out. It never gets filled up, however,

[1] George Adam Smith, Historical Geography of the Holy Land.
[2] Huntington, Palestine and its Transformation.

and never overflows, because the heat is so intense down in that torrid valley that the water evaporates very rapidly. This causes the atmosphere to be exceedingly moist and all the more unbearable in the hot season.[1] It also causes all the mineral elements to be deposited in the sea; not any are carried off, so that it has become the saltiest body of water known, the water containing twenty-five per cent of salts. No living thing can exist in it — all fish die within a few feet of shore, all palm trees and plants on the borders, which sometimes become inundated, wither up and perish. If a man tries to swim, as soon as he has reached a depth up to his armpits he is lifted off his feet "and vainly wiggles his toes in an attempt to touch bottom." If the wind blows, the heavy water very slowly rises into waves, but finally breaks with tremendous force dangerous to boats and men.[2] But because of its peculiarities this body of water produces some of the most beautiful color effects known.[3]

And so, geologically, Palestine is a most interesting country with which to become acquainted. But there is still another reason why every student should mark Palestine in red as one of the spots on the globe that he knows about; and that is because it contains a greater variety of plants and animals than any other country of its size in the world.[3] How many know that the cyclamen which you buy at the greenhouse in winter, with its beautiful

[1] "Owing to the proximity of the desert and the intense heat — the temperature rising in summer as high as 118° — it is the scene of a stupendous process of evaporation. It is computed that between six and eight million tons of water rise in vapor from this great natural caldron each day." — Kent, Biblical Geography and History.

[2] Huntington, Palestine and its Transformation.

[3] Kent, Biblical Geography and History.

rose-colored blossoms, is a native of Palestine? How many have supposed that the common old-fashioned hollyhock which grows in your grandmother's garden in the country received its name from the holy-hocys of the Holy Land brought back to England by the Crusaders?[1] Did you know also that our delicate maidenhair fern could be seen in some of the caves over there, as well as the lilies and the mustard spoken of in the Gospels, and crocuses and narcissi, bachelor's-buttons and wild mignonette, besides gorgeous fields of red anemone, the wild rose, and "an endless variety of orchids"?[2] Around the marshes of Lake Huleh are found acres of the papyrus reed, some of it growing sixteen feet high. This is the plant that used to grow in such profusion in Egypt and from which the first paper was made by cutting it into strips and pasting them together. It took the place of the expensive sheepskin for writing purposes, and many of our old manuscripts were written on this kind of paper. But now this reed is wholly extinct in Egypt and, except in Palestine, is not found again until one reaches Assyria or India.[3]

If you should visit the Semitic Museum at Harvard University, you would find a collection of Palestinian birds, some of them looking much like our own. You would recognize the raven, of which there are no less than seven kinds in Palestine. The Palestinian crow has a gray body and black wings. There are quail in the grass, as well as

[1] A. Goodrich-Freer, Things Seen in Palestine.

[2] Goodrich-Freer, Things Seen in Palestine; Grant, The Peasantry of Palestine; Tristram, Natural History of the Bible; W. M. Thomson, The Land and the Book.

[3] Tristram, Natural History of the Bible; Grant, The Peasantry of Palestine.

partridges in the hills and owls in the ruins. There is the white stork with black wings, red bill, and red legs, and there are many long-legged water birds. Swallows, goldfinches, doves, white sparrows, and even robin redbreasts, are among the smaller birds. But there are some birds in the regions near the Dead Sea not found elsewhere in any part of the world.[1] In Palestine almost every kind of creature seems to flourish, from sheep and dogs and camels to bears, hyenas, wolves, and jackals, and from lizards and snakes to bats and most enormous grasshoppers. The remarkable thing about the flora and fauna of Palestine is not the number of species but the fact that ordinarily these plants and animals are found in such widely separated places. Serpents and lizards are found in hot countries, bears and deer in cold; maidenhair ferns are found in Vermont and Canada, and cyclamen nowhere in America but in hothouses. Yet here in Palestine they are all together. It is the native habitat of palm trees and fir trees, olives and apricots, figs and grapes. The reason for it of course is that there is such a variety of climate in this little land, from the torrid Jordan Valley to the cold, snow-clad mountains of Lebanon. There is a puzzle in the Book of Samuel.[2] I wonder if you can tell the answer. How could a boy named Benaiah find a lion (whose habitat is a torrid jungle) in a cave where there was snow? The answer would be hard to find in America but very simple in Palestine years ago, before lions were extinct. The lion lived in the Jordan Valley and by mistake

[1] Tristram, Natural History of the Bible; Grant, The Peasantry of Palestine.

[2] 2 Sam. xxiii, 20.

one hot day wandered up the west bank only five or six miles into a cave in the mountains of Judea about three thousand feet above his home.[1]

But there is yet another reason why these plants and animals are interesting. They represent the flora and fauna of different continents — of Asia and Africa and Europe. Ordinarily in studying geography you classify these living things separately according to continents, but here they are together. It is because Palestine is a bridge between these continents, a meeting place, a point of adventure from north to south and from east to west, and also because it is such a narrow bridge, with the hot desert on one side and the cool Mediterranean Sea on the other.[2] We shall find later that it has been a bridge and meeting place for human beings of various continents and races,[1] as well as for plants and animals, but just now we will confine ourselves to this third reason for including Palestine in our study of geography: namely, that it has the most remarkable variety of flora and fauna of any known country.[2]

The fourth reason is the historical. Of course when we speak of history we mean the story of the human race. We have been speaking of the story of the earth, its rocks, its plants, its animals. That is all history in one sense, the history of the earth, and goes back thousands of years before the history of man ever began at all. Man, indeed, is the highest animal and caps the story of the development of the earth. But in the sense in which it

[1] Smith, Historical Geography of the Holy Land.

[2] Huntington, Palestine and its Transformation; Standard Bible Dictionary, art. "Animals."

is ordinarily used, history means the story of the life of men on earth. And Palestine is a remarkable country because of its bearings upon the history of men. In the first place it is situated very near what is supposed to be "the cradle of the human race"[1] — the place where the land first became fit for men to live, where they first appeared on the earth and gradually developed into tribes and races. Palestine is not the birthplace of the first man, but it is near enough to the earliest developments of mankind to take us away back to primitive society and conditions and show us how those early nomads lived — how they began to settle down and become agriculturists and cease to wander about for their living, how commerce first began to develop and merchant vessels to be launched upon the sea by the Phœnicians and great overland roads to be built between cities. Moreover, it lies upon the direct path between the oldest civilizations of the world, Babylonia and Egypt, with their important cities, and it was across this bridge, or pathway, that men passed to and fro and exchanged ideas in the earliest days of history. The oldest road in the world runs through Palestine — the ancient caravan route from Egypt up the coast and across the Plain of Esdraelon at Dothan, then over the Jordan Valley just north of the Sea of Galilee and on to Damascus and the East. Along that road came the traders to whom Joseph was sold by his brethren to be taken down into Egypt as a slave, and along that road the caravans passing to and fro brought the news of the world to this little isolated country of Hebrews.

[1] See George A. Barton, A Sketch of Semitic Origins, pp. 13 ff., for a brief résumé of the theories concerning the origin of the human race and of the early branch known as the Semitic race.

Doubtless this was why the prophets were so well informed concerning the world's affairs of their day.

Palestine to-day retains more of the primitive setting of society than almost any other country, because customs have changed so very little there.[1] For centuries the world's attention has been on other spots of the globe, so far as the progress of civilization is concerned. New continents have been discovered with much more promise. Men's minds and hearts have been full of great adventures westward and northward over Europe and America, and latterly to the great unknown parts of the older continents, Africa and Asia. They have left Palestine practically to her own devices, and for various reasons she has until very recently stood still, so far as changing her customs of life is concerned. So if one wants to see with his own eyes illustrations of some of the stories in the Arabian Nights, like "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," the borders of Arabia over on the eastern side of the Jordan River, in Moab and Hauran and Edom, are good places to visit, where the roaming Bedouins live in tents and wander from place to place for pasture and where there are underground caves for robbers, much as in olden days. Or let him read the true modern story of Sit-Ikwitha, "The Lady of her Brethren," whose wealth and power still sways the Lydda district.[2] If one becomes acquainted with the real life of the people off from the regular lines of tourist travel, he may see Abraham with his flocks by a well settling a dispute over the water rights, or Ruth

[1] P. J. Baldensperger, The Immovable East; Goodrich-Freer, Things Seen in Palestine.

[2] Baldensperger, The Immovable East, p. 197.

gleaning in the field of Boaz. They still plow with a stick over there, so that it is dangerous to look back instead of keeping one's eyes on the plow, and their clannish spirit and family feuds are much like the tales of the Book of Judges.[1] The actual wells and cisterns and threshing floors of ancient days may be seen. There is an aqueduct near Jerusalem with an inscription on it written by King Hezekiah about 700 B.C. The ancient pillars of the city of Samaria, that city of "glorious beauty which is at the head of the fat valley,"[2] loom up now in desolate ruins to commemorate the days of Omri and Herod, and remains of the luxurious baths of Roman times are also there. Going much farther back than this in the history of mankind, there are relics of the days of primitive cave men, with their flint implements, centuries before Jerusalem was ever known to the Hebrews.[3]

Just because Palestine forms this narrow bridge between two continents and the two oldest civilizations of the world,[4] there have traveled up and down it through the centuries a great variety of races for various purposes — war and conquest, peace and trade, patriotic and religious devotion. Here is a list of the armies that have gone up and down, either to get at Egypt or Assyria or to conquer Palestine itself: the Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Ethiopians, the Hittites (the strong, virile race marching south from their capital in Asia Minor, where pictures of

[1] Baldensperger, The Immovable East; Goodrich-Freer, Things Seen in Palestine, p. 73.

[2] Isa. xxviii, 1.

[3] H. T. Fowler, The History of the Literature of Ancient Israel, p. 2; Kent, Biblical Geography and History, p. 88.

[4] Smith, Historical Geography of the Holy Land.

them are found upon the rocks with toboggan caps and mittens), the Scythians, the Persians, the Parthians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Moslems, the Mongols, the Turks, the Crusaders, and Napoleon with his Frenchmen. In 1898 the German Emperor made a visit, not of war but of peace, and in honor of his arrival "roads were made, bridges built, and improvements carried out wherever his visits were looked for."[1] Some of the exploits of these armies make thrilling tales. Down in Egypt there has been discovered on the wall of a temple, which recounts the adventures and conquests of the great King Thutmose III, a picture of a vessel coming home from Palestine with three heads of petty princes dangling from the prow. There is also an account of how this same Thutmose used to send his army up to the Plain of Esdraelon every year to cut the grain necessary to keep the horses for his many soldiers. On one of these expeditions the account tells us that he carried away one hundred and fifty thousand bushels. This was about 1500 B.C., and the battle field of Megiddo, the gateway to this fertile plain, where Thutmose fought a big battle and won a great victory, is one of the very oldest battle fields known to history. The record says that at this first great conflict between the Egyptian and Asiatic races Thutmose had his forces ranged up the side of Mt. Carmel and declared that he would go forth at the head of his army himself, "showing the way by his own footsteps."[2] He carried away this time nine hundred and twenty-four chariots, twenty-two hundred and thirty-eight horses, two hundred suits of armor, and

[1] Goodrich-Freer, Things Seen in Palestine, p. 211.

[2] J. H. Breasted, History of the Ancient Egyptians, pp. 225 ff.

the gorgeous tent of the king of Kadesh, besides his household furniture and gold and silver. The great obelisk in Central Park, New York, is one of the monuments of this King Thutmose. In the British Museum in London is a tablet found in Assyria in 1839 recounting the exploits of their great King Sennacherib and telling how he took away from Palestine as spoil "many thousands of captives and horses, mules, asses, camels, oxen, and sheep without number," and how King "Hezekiah was shut up like a bird in a cage in the midst of Jerusalem." This was about 700 B.C. The story of Judas Maccabeus, "The Hammerer," and the guerrilla warfare against the Syrians, which his small band of loyal Jews carried on to victory,[1] is as thrilling as the tale of David hiding in the caves with his band of four hundred discontented men,[2] the "Coxey's Army" of his day. Herod the Great[3] won his first spurs by capturing the robbers hiding under the cliffs east of the Sea of Galilee, lowering his soldiers in baskets till they were opposite the hiding men and could thrust them with their spears. The history of the Crusaders[4] and the Knights Templars has been the background for many a romantic tale,[5] while the legend of St. George and the Dragon has its home in Joppa. To cap it all, the modern historic figure Napoleon III,[6] like Alexander the Great,[7] must try his fortune in the Holy Land. Up north of the Lebanons, on the cliffs of the Dog River,

[1] About 166 B.C. See 1 Maccabees.

[2] About 1000 B.C. See 1 Sam. xxii, 1, 2.

[3] About 40 B.C. See Shailer Mathews, History of New Testament Times in Palestine.

[4] About 1100–1300 A.D.

[5] See the novels of Sir Walter Scott, Marion Crawford, and others.

[6] 1860 A.D.

[7] 332 B.C.

he erased the ancient inscription of the conquests of an Egyptian king in order to write his own name there as conqueror of the East. The European or American traveler to-day is known in Palestine as a Frank.

All this belongs to history, but it belongs to geography also, because it was the situation of the land which caused these nations to race back and forth over it and to quarrel continuously for its ownership. Of not much importance in itself, it was of great importance because it was the pathway between the continents. And one of the remarkable things, due very largely to the character of the country, is that a little people in such a narrow strip of land could retain so strongly their individual characteristics and not be swallowed up by the greedy powers hovering over them, at the same time bequeathing to the world so rich a literature and so great a religion. It is doubtless due largely to the facts that while there was room for a caravan route along the coast, there were no harbors to welcome ships until the extreme north was gained, and that while this coast road made an easy path from Egypt to Assyria, the rugged hills of Judea held no attractions to lure the traveler upwards to stay and make this his home. The prophet pictured Jehovah as hovering over Jerusalem and protecting her as an eagle hovers over her nest, high upon the rocks,[1] and Jerusalem was one of the best protected fortresses known in ancient history, high up the mountain away from the main line of travel, and with such steep ascents on three sides that no army could think of entering her walls except upon the north. The lower lands of Samaria and Philistia were conquered and overrun, and

[1] Isa. xxxi. 5.

lost their tribes and identity, long before Judea gave in. Up there at the top of the earth the Hebrew prophet looked down on the motley array of the nations and heard the news of the world, but he communed with the God of heaven and poured out his poetical aspirations, which have lasted and will last as enduring possessions in the literature of the world.

That literature which is embodied in the Old Testament is only fragments of the whole of Hebrew literature, the portions which escaped amid the exiles and burnings and manifold adventures and persecutions of the Hebrew people; but it is among the richest literatures of the world and has affected our own English language more than any other literature has.[1] It is impossible to understand our own literature, the references and figures of speech in our own best writers, unless we are familiar with the Old Testament tales and lyrics. Moreover, it is quite impossible to understand the figures of speech which the Hebrew poets and prophets used unless we are familiar with the physiography of Palestine — the winds, the fires, the storms, the rains, the desert and its drought, the mountains and their snows, the shepherd's life, the labor of the vinedresser, the refreshing fragrance of the balsam fir, and the blasting blight of a grasshopper scourge.

The reader has doubtless been aware that at least nine extreme statements have been made concerning Palestine; yet they are not extravagant, but true to fact. It is the smallest country in the world to contain so varied a climate

[1] J. R. Green, Short History of the English People, chap. viii; J. H. Gardiner, The Bible as English Literature; H. H. Horne, Psychological Principles of Education, chap. xxxiv.

and landscape. It contains the most marked and varied flora and fauna in the world. It has the most wonderful valley in the world. The oldest road in the world runs along its coast. That coast is one of the most forbidding and harborless of shores. Palestine contains one of the oldest battlefields of history and one of the most impregnable natural fortresses of the East. It was the birthplace of one of the richest literatures of the world, though only fragments are preserved, and it is the background for the religious life of one half of the people of the globe.[1] This is enough to make one want to know the land of Palestine.

There is, however, one more reason, more superficial, but a good one. These are the days when the whole earth is circled by travelers, and trips to the Orient are becoming more frequent. The tour to Egypt and the Near East, including Palestine and Damascus, is one now very commonly taken. But of all lands it is impossible to appreciate Palestine by hastily studying one's Baedeker on the journey or by relying upon one's casual and disconnected knowledge of certain Bible verses. There are indeed not a few familiar with the Bible text who do not wish to see the land for fear the bloom of their ideal will be rudely brushed off by actual contact with the barren hillsides and the hot roads. But one who knows it well says, "It will be generally found that those who are most disenchanted are those who know the country least." It will add immensely to the pleasure and profit of such a trip to have in mind before one starts some of the bearings of physical geography upon the life and literature of a most significant race.

[1] Including Mohammedans.

PART II

OLD TESTAMENT MASTERPIECES

SELECTION I. THE COAST

Isa. xvii, 12–14

The great prophets were great poets. They were more than mere poets, however, for their first thought, perhaps their only conscious thought, was the burning message they had to give to the people concerning the high loyalties demanded of them — loyalty to their God and loyalty to their national ideals. But so much a part were they of nature's self that the messages they spoke sprang from their lips in the natural rhythm and with the musical charm and imaginative expression of true poetry.

The Hebrews were a people of passionate feeling, and they expressed their feeling in the sounds of nature — not only likening the power of the Almighty to the thunder and lightning, but imitating its crash and roll as a storm broke over the hills; not only seeing a great army traveling down the old caravan road ready to obliterate any enemy that stood in its way, but actually hearing its noise like the noise of the waves booming against the bleak coast. Have you ever heard the waves of the ocean boom? Go out on the little island of Monhegan off the Maine coast and listen some day over on the east shore as the waves

dash up on those high rocks, or read Lowell's "Pictures from Appledore" and see how magnificently he uses the poetical figure of onomatopœia — the likeness of thought and sound — in representing the beating of the waves against the crags of Appledore. This was precisely the way the Hebrew prophet described his terror when he saw the armies of his enemy, Assyria, approaching, for Assyria was Israel's most dreaded foe. The Hebrew poet heard this "King of Multitudes" [1] coming like the roar of the waves on the Mediterranean shore, that straight, bleak, inhospitable coast, which warned men off with the unfriendly rushing and booming of the waters against the sand and bluffs. This forms the first strophe of this little poem. In the second the prophet sees the enemy chased and fleeing fast, as the chaff on the out-of-doors threshing floor is whirled off by a great gust of wind in harvest time. In the third strophe he sums up the fearful fright the people have had as if it was all a dream. As the night comes on behold the terror, but in the morning it is all over, except that the army has left its trail behind, where the soldiers have plundered the poor farms and villages on the way.

In this little poem the writer shows a truly artistic power in his use of sounds expressive of feelings. It is one of the finest examples in all literature of such striking verbal effect.

Ah!
The booming of many peoples!
Like the booming of seas they boom!
And the roar of mighty nations!
As with the roar of waters do they roar!

[1] This is what this King Sennacherib is called on an Assyrian bas-relief in the British Museum. This bas-relief represents him seated on a throne receiving the homage of Jewish captives.

But Jehovah shall rebuke him,
And he shall flee far away and be pursued
Like chaff of the mountains before the wind,
And as the whirling dust before the tempest.

At eventide — lo! terror,
Ere morning he shall be no more.
This shall be the lot of them that spoil us,
And the portion of them that plunder us.[1]

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR THE TEACHER OR CLASS

For the character of the coast and the importance of the roads, see

SMITH, GEORGE ADAM. Historical Geography of the Holy Land, chap. vii, "The Coast." A. C. Armstrong & Son, New York. $4.50.

HASTINGS. Dictionary of the Bible, extra volume, art. "Roads." Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

KENT, C. F. Biblical Geography and History, chap. ix, "The Great Highways." The Pilgrim Press, Boston. $1.50.

HUNTINGTON, ELLSWORTH. Palestine and its Transformation. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. $2.00.

For the poetry of the Old Testament, see

GORDON, A. R. The Poets of the Old Testament, chap. i, "General Characteristics of Hebrew Poetry." George H. Doran Company, New York. $1.50.

For an example in English literature of the use of onomatopœia, see

LOWELL, JAMES RUSSELL. Pictures from Appledore.

For the character of the Assyrian army, see

BYRON, LORD. The Destruction of Sennacherib.

Bible dictionaries and encyclopædias, arts. "Assyrians" and "Sennacherib."

For the historical setting of this passage, see

DRIVER, S. R. Isaiah: his Life and Times, chap. vii, "The Great Deliverance." Fleming H. Revell Company, New York. 75 cents.

[1] Translation in International Critical Commentary.

For the religious influence of nature, see

VAN DYKE, HENRY. The God of the Open Air.
TENNYSON, ALFRED. "Flower in the crannied wall."

For the influence of roads in literature, see

BURROUGHS, JOHN. The Exhilarations of the Road.
WHITMAN, WALT. The Open Road.
GRAYSON, DAVID. The Friendly Road.

Underwood & Underwood's Stereographs of Palestine are highly recommended for illustration of all these selections. Address Underwood & Underwood, 417 Fifth Avenue, New York.

SELECTION II. THE ROADS

The Story of Joseph and his Brethren

Gen. xxxvii

This selection illustrates again the importance of the old coast road, not only for armies to pass up and down from Assyria to Egypt but for traders who wished to go from Nineveh or Damascus or any of the lesser towns along the way down to the emporiums of the South, either Memphis or Thebes on the Nile, or the cities in the Delta before the capitals should be reached. It was not safe to travel alone over there in olden times any more than it is now. Travelers to-day go through Palestine in parties; travelers then went through in caravans, picking up merchandise and news by the way. The roads which pass across the country are one of the most interesting features; in ancient times they must have been especially so, with all the caravans of various sizes and sorts appearing and then disappearing again in the distance. Egypt and Babylonia were the rich markets of the world in those days, and this Palestine road, which is the oldest road in the world, was the great trunk line between them. Sometimes these caravans would consist of merchants with donkeys and camels loaded down with sacks of grain. Sometimes more important persons would be journeying from one country to another with a bodyguard

of soldiers and a whole retinue of servants. Sometimes it would be a king's messenger running to carry word to his master of the victory or defeat of the army. Ambassadors to the court would pass along, too, bringing presents or tribute to pacify the man they feared. Then again it would be a procession of poor, humble people, barefoot peasants and a group of neighbors from some village, who had errands further on the way. They could easily carry their possessions in their girdles or in bundles swung over their shoulders.[1] A few of the caravans that came toiling along the way from Egypt to the East chose the road through Petra and Arabia, on the eastern side of the Jordan, but most of them took the coast road which branched off south of Carmel and led through the attractive and fertile valley of Dothan. Dothan was the place where the main scene of the story of Joseph is laid. The home of Joseph's family was Hebron, in the south of Palestine, but they were still nomads wandering hither and yon with their flocks to find pasturage. These brothers had wandered this time as far north as Dothan, which was a very fertile region, green with grass when the fields about Hebron, so near the desert, would be dry. The pit where

[1] This girdle is the most important item of the peasant's dress to-day. "Though his bodily wants may be few, he requires a large number of articles ever to hand, hence the girdle serves the purpose of an indispensable storeroom. Upon it are suspended chains, hooks, pouches and horns to hold knives, daggers, clubs, powder and shot, flint and steel, tinder, packneedles and thread, pipes, tobacco and cigarette papers, razors and combs, handkerchiefs and documents. A man without his girdle was always considered in the East to be in a position of inferiority; very much as an Occidental would be in his nightgown. The command 'gird up thy loins' meant — be ready for an emergency. Without his girdle a man was unprepared either for war or for journeying." — Baldensperger, The Immovable East.



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JOSEPH'S WELL

they hid Joseph to get him out of the way was doubtless an old cistern. An ancient well is there to-day.

This chapter in Genesis illustrates also the marvelous power the Hebrews had in telling stories. In the earliest days of any nation's history, Greek and Roman, German, Scotch and English, and preëminently of the oriental peoples, there used to be story-tellers, who would sit around the camp fires at night and either sing or tell the tales of the early tribal history — love stories, war stories, hero stories of all sorts. Story-telling is now coming to be a revived art. To-day we have professional story-tellers, people who have come to appreciate the high art, the naïve simplicity, the rich imagery, the power to interest both old and young, which good stories hold. But all who are adepts at story-telling agree that there are no better tales to tell, from any of these standpoints, than the stories of the Bible. Teachers of English in our colleges urge their students to go to the Old Testament to find out how to tell stories, and the Story-Tellers' League recommends Bible stories as affording the richest of material.

Among the cycles of stories in the Old Testament the Joseph stories rank very high from the story-teller's point of view. Their hero is attractive, they are full of interesting detail, the progress of the scenes is rapid; there is vivid contrast in the characters introduced, in the countries depicted, and in the fortunes of the chief actors; there are suspense and hints of tragedy as the story proceeds, but it all turns out right at the end. Every child should hear this story for its own sake and every child should know about Joseph and his coat of many colors in order to appreciate the many references to them in

literature. Let him see the little brother Joseph, the spoiled child of the family, bragging even in his dreams; the exasperation of his older brothers and their plan to get rid of him; the kindheartedness underneath the rough exterior of Reuben; the Ishmaelite caravan coming from the East with goods of all sorts to sell in Egypt—not only spicery and balm and myrrh, but even slaves picked up on the way; the stop they made at Dothan as the brothers were eating their noonday meal; the *dénouement* of it all when, with the silver in their pockets, they saw the last camels disappear down the coast road, bearing their little brother off to Egypt as a slave; and the hurry with which they concocted a plausible story to tell their father while they dyed Joseph's pretty coat in the blood of a goat. The child will be sure to ask if that is all, and you must tell him the rest; but this is enough for our purpose now, to show how even the roads of a land enter into its literature.

And Jacob dwelt in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan. These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and he was a lad with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought the evil report of them unto their father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors. And his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren; and they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: for, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves came round about, and made obeisance to

my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it to his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed yet a dream; and, behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren; and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father kept the saying in mind.

And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. And Israel said unto Joseph, Are not thy brethren feeding the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I. And he said to him, Go now, see whether it is well with thy brethren, and well with the flock; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? And he said, I am seeking my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they are feeding the flock. And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

And they saw him afar off, and before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into one of the pits, and we will say, An evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams. And Reuben heard it, and delivered him out of their hand, and said, Let us not take his life. And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood; cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but lay no hand upon him: that he might deliver him out of their hand, to restore him to his father. And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph of his coat, the coat of many colors that was on him; and they took him, and cast him into the pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.

And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother, our flesh. And his brethren hearkened unto him. And there passed by Midianites, merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they brought Joseph into Egypt.

And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes. And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go? And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a he-goat, and dipped the coat in the blood; and they sent the coat of many colors, and they brought it to their father, and said, This have we found: know now whether it is thy son's coat or not. And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces. And Jacob rent his garments, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down to Sheol to my son mourning. And his father wept for him. And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard.

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR THE TEACHER OR CLASS

For roads and caravans, see

HUNTINGTON, ELLSWORTH. Palestine and its Transformation, pp. 158–159.

For the art of story-telling, see

BALDWIN, C. S. How to Write, chap. iii, "How to tell a Story." The Macmillan Company, New York. 50 cents.

ST. JOHN, E. P. Stories and Story-Telling. The Pilgrim Press, Boston. 60 cents.

BRYANT, SARA CONE. How to tell Stories to Children. Houghton Mifflin Company. $1.00.

HOUGHTON, LOUISE SEYMOUR. Telling Bible Stories, chap. vii, "Hero Tales." Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. $1.25.

HERVEY, WALTER L. Picture Work, chap. v, "Stories and Story-Telling." Fleming H. Revell Company, New York. 25 cents.

For stories retold, including Bible stories, see

BRYANT, SARA CONE. Stories to tell to Children. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. $1.00.

SALISBURY, GRACE E., and BECKWITH, MARIE E. Index to Short Stories. Row, Peterson & Co., Chicago. 50 cents.

List of Good Stories to tell to Children under Twelve Years of Age. Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. 5 cents.

GASKOM, MRS. HERMAN. Children's Treasury of Bible Stories. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. $1.25.

HODGES, GEORGE. The Garden of Eden, chap. vii, "The Coat of Many Colors." Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. $1.50.

BALDWIN, JAMES. Old Stories from the East. American Book Company, New York. 45 cents.

SELECTION III. THE HILLS

Ps. xxiv, 7–10 (xxiii, 7–10, Douay); Ps. cxxi (cxx, Douay); Ps. cxxv, 1, 2 (cxxiv, 1, 2, Douay); Gen. xxii, 1–18; Isa. xxx, 15–17; Isa. xxxi, 1, 3–5.

Although Palestine was open to the world along the coast, where the foreigner traveled freely with his armies and his merchandise, the Judean hills were a naturally fortified region which by their very ruggedness and isolation protected the inhabitants from unwelcome visitors. Upon the very top of this range of mountains looms Mount Zion, nearly three thousand feet above sea level. This was the spot which David very wisely chose for his capital. Jerusalem, however, was already an ancient city in David's time, about 1000 B.C., the time of the heroes of Homer's stories. Jerusalem was much older than Abraham, even, for it was there before we know anything at all of Hebrew history. When David dedicated this mount as his capital and as the place of worship for the God of his nation, he wrote a dedication hymn. This was doubtless to be sung as the procession of people wound its way up the hill with the ark.[1] In this hymn David speaks of the gates of the city as everlasting doors. The literal meaning of the word translated "everlasting" is "ancient," exceedingly old—so

[1] There is some question concerning the Davidic origin of this Psalm, but Professor Briggs says, "It is difficult to see how a Psalm could better fit a historical situation," and Professor Gordon thinks that while its setting belongs to a much later period, these verses (7 ff.) "strike the antique note" of the Davidic times (International Critical Commentary, "Psalms," and Gordon, The Poets of the Old Testament).

old that no one can remember when they were first placed there. The earliest people who inhabited the land saw the possibilities of this high hill as a fortress. There is evidence that even back behind the history of civilization the cave men sought refuge within a few miles of here.

When King David ascended the throne he brought with him not only a remarkable genius for seeing what ought to be done to make his kingdom strong but also the ability to accomplish it. One of the things which he saw very plainly was that his army must not only conquer the enemy in the battlefield but there must be a capital so well fortified that no enemy could surprise them and take it away. This he found in Jerusalem. The old city stood the test of time well, resisting many an attack until it was the very last city to fall before the Babylonians carried the people away captive. David also saw that if his people were to be loyal to their God they must have a central place to worship, where they would all come together from time to time with united enthusiasm. The king was a musician and a singer, as well as a warrior, with the dramatic feeling of an Oriental. He knew how to draw out the enthusiasm of a crowd and to make use of it for noble purposes. Therefore as the people came together on this great occasion, he had them march up the hill bearing the ark of Jehovah and singing the song he had composed. It is thought that he had a choir, perhaps two choirs, singing in the procession, and a soloist standing on the wall. As the choir approached the city gates they sang,

> Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
> And be ye lifted up, ye ancient doors,
> And the King of Glory will come in.

Then the soloist on the rampart replied,

Who is the King of Glory?

Then all the people answered,

Jehovah, strong and mighty,
Jehovah, mighty in battle.

The choir once more challenged the city gates:

Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Yea, lift them up, ye ancient doors,
And the King of Glory will come in.

Once more the soloist sang out,

Who is this King of Glory?

And the people replied,

Jehovah of hosts,
He is the King of Glory.

Thus David took this citadel for the dwelling place of his God Jehovah and for the capital of his nation. In true loftiness of spirit he had arranged the entire pageant to impress the people with the fact that it was not David, with his brilliant career, but Jehovah, who was their great King, Jehovah, "the King of Glory."

In later years some one probably added to this hymn the first part of the Psalm, for it is in an altogether different style, not nearly so poetical nor so musical. In these few verses we doubtless have one of the very oldest hymns of the nation, and even with the additions it is a noble song worthy to be named "The Grand Processional."

There are other hymns in the great hymn book of the Hebrews, the Book of Psalms, which celebrate Jerusalem and will forever perpetuate the high regard this people

had for their holy city. A collection of fifteen such songs within the book (Ps. cxx–cxxxiv) is called "The Pilgrim Psalter." These songs are lyrics of wonderful power and grace. It was the custom of the people to sing them on their journeys up to the great festivals held in Jerusalem. Imagine a caravan of people coming from the north country, picking up their relatives and neighbors in the villages through which they went, camping out by the wayside over night and singing their national hymns by the camp fire. As the Judean hills came closer and Mount Zion burst upon their view, they would break out with such a song as this:

> I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains:
> From whence shall my help come?
> My help cometh from Jehovah,
> Who made heaven and earth.

In their journeying they would know the need of a firm foot for climbing, of protection as they slept, of a merciful Providence that would keep them both from sunstroke by day and from moonstroke, or the lunacy or epilepsy that they believed came often from sleeping in the moonlight. They looked to Jehovah to keep them from all evil.

There is something always uplifting about the hills. The very fact of looking up to a noble peak draws out the aspirations of one's heart to climb upwards and be noble. Washington Gladden, one of our own hymn writers, is a Williams College man. Going back once to the scene of his college days among the Berkshire Hills, he was impressed anew with the wonderful drawing power of the hills themselves. Upon his return home from a walk on Stone Hill he sat down and composed "The Mountains,"

which has ever since been the Williams College song. Every year when Williams men gather with their classmates around the banquet table or at commencement to sing the praises of their Alma Mater, it is

> The Mountains! the Mountains!
> We greet them with a song,

which rings out the most feelingly.

The fact of being on a high place and looking down over the world and up to the "all uncharted seas" of the sky with its myriads of stars lifts one's heart up to the Creator of heaven and earth. Nature lovers feel this keenly to-day, but perhaps not nearly to the extent that those ancient people felt it, in their out-of-door life, seeking the "high places" as their places of prayer.

How much those "high places" meant in stirring up lofty thoughts and giving birth to great religions we are just beginning to appreciate. Archæologists have recently made interesting discoveries in their excavations of the city of Petra in Edom, seventy miles southeast of the Dead Sea. This old city is true to its name *Petra*, which means "rock," for its buildings were not built stone upon stone but hewn out of the living rock. There is no other city of the world to compare with Petra in this respect, for temples, sanctuaries and a theater are constructed in this manner, with elaborate pillars, carvings, and color designs. One of the most interesting of the excavations has been that of the Great High Place on the top of one of the highest and most conspicuous of the neighboring mountain peaks, with an elevation of 3600 feet. Niches about a hundred feet apart for statues and pillars, and the ruins of a watchtower,



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THE GREAT HIGH PLACE AT PETRA

are to be seen on these stairways. Some of these adornments were doubtless placed there in mediæval times, and the elaborate sanctuary with its altars and seats for worshipers dates perhaps not farther back than 300 B.C., but the "high place" itself, with its simple raised platform cut away from the rest of the rock, was doubtless a sacred shrine, a place of prayer in the very early days of the Semitic race. Up there on that high, lonely mountain, looking down over the valleys and off to the high peaks beyond, and above to the heavens, with nothing between themselves and the greatness of God, men poured out their petitions to the Deity and offered their sacrifices of gratitude for favors or of propitiation for sin. About twenty-five of these "high places" have been discovered near Petra, and this is only one illustration of the prevalence, throughout the whole region, of shrines upon the summits of the hills. Worship on such lofty places surely had much to do in developing the high religious ideals of the Semites.

In time the Hebrews outgrew the primitive worship at the "high places" of the tribes around them and built a glorious temple on Mount Zion, but it was nevertheless the expression of the same craving for the high and lofty. Such a song as the one hundred twenty-first Psalm was worthy of being a national hymn, because when the people looked up to the hills they spoke of God in their hearts.

I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains:
From whence shall my help come?
My help cometh from Jehovah,
Who made heaven and earth.
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.

Behold, he that keepeth Israel
Will neither slumber nor sleep.
Jehovah is thy keeper:
Jehovah is thy shade upon thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day,
Nor the moon by night.
Jehovah will keep thee from all evil;
He will keep thy soul.
Jehovah will keep thy going out and thy coming in
From this time forth and for evermore.

Another of these hymns in the Pilgrim Psalter begins

They that trust in Jehovah
Are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved,
but abideth for ever.
As the mountains are round about Jerusalem,
So Jehovah is round about his people
From this time forth and for evermore.[1]

Abraham on Mount Moriah

Gen. xxii, 1–18

It was to one of these "high places"—Mount Moriah—that Abraham, in the very earliest Hebrew history, took his son Isaac to sacrifice him to Jehovah. It seems a very strange thing to us that any father who loved his boy could think of doing such a barbarous deed, but we must remember, that was a barbarous, half-civilized age, when it was the custom of the heathen tribes in Canaan to sacrifice their first-born sons to their gods. This was doubtless the way Abraham reasoned: "Jehovah is my God, and I must show that I regard him as highly as any of these

[1] Ps. cxxv, 1, 2.

other tribes regard their gods. They sacrifice the most precious things they have, not only the first-born of their flocks but their first-born sons, to show to what length they will go in loyalty to their gods, and so I must show my loyalty to Jehovah by giving my very best to him." It is true God asked him to give his best; our God always asks our very best. But it was up there on the "high place," communing with the spiritual God of heaven, that Abraham found out that the true God does not demand such barbarous deeds in presenting to him the best we have. Abraham there learned that we please God much better by a consecrated life than by a bloody death — that we should be ready to die for our faith, indeed, if necessary, but that useless sacrifice of life God not only does not require but forbids. This was a great step in the evolution of religion. When the world learned that, it learned a great lesson, yet it has not wholly learned it even to this day, for men still sacrifice children in sweatshops and factories. Abraham was one of the world's greatest religious geniuses, because up there on that "high place" he had the clarified vision to recognize the truth. Other races have similar tales (as, for example, the Greek story of Iphigenia), but no other story rises to the sublime height of religious perception which this story of Abraham and Isaac contains. This story has held the interest of many generations and is one of the best-told in the Old Testament.

And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham; and he said, Here am I. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took in his hand the fire and the knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold, the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering? And Abraham said, God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son: so they went both of them together.

And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built the altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of Jehovah called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of Jehovah it shall be provided. And the angel of Jehovah called unto Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Isaiah's Warning

Isa. xxx, 15–17; Isa. xxxi, 1, 3–5

The natural strength which Israel had in the hills was seen by the great prophets as well as by David. Some of them realized the danger that such a little nation would incur if she tried to fight with the formidable hosts of the Assyrians and Egyptians in the kind of warfare they were accustomed to and with their weapons; they realized also that Israel might utterly defeat her enemies, or at least escape them entirely, if she clung to the advantages of her own rustic home training, just as David with his sling had the advantage over the Philistine and his sword.[1] The Hebrews were experts at guerrilla warfare, that is, hiding in small bands among the hills and in caves, and springing out unexpectedly upon the enemy, much as our Indians used to do in the forests. David used this method most successfully.[2] Judas Maccabeus won his victories that way.[3] On the other hand, the Assyrians and Egyptians fought best out in the open, with great armies, with horses and chariots and much display of power. This they could do on the plains but not on the rocky hillsides. Chariots were of no use for fighting in such steep places as Jerusalem and the hill country of Judea. Down in Samaria they could be used to better advantage. The Hebrews often saw them there passing down the coast road to Egypt. One of the Assyrian monarchs, who conquered right and left, had a chariot with a scythe attached, with which to mow down the people; but a mowing machine is

[1] 1 Sam. xvii. [2] 1 Samuel [3] 1 Maccabees.

of little account on a rocky hillside, and so Isaiah warned his townsmen to stay at home in Jerusalem and not go down to the plain to fight with chariots and horses. The chariots and cavalry of Assyria were considered the most powerful in the world, and Egypt was always famous for its fine horses. The Israelites were preëminently an infantry people and could fight best on foot. There came a time, however, when they considered it plebeian to stick to their old customs. They thought that in order to be like the people of the world, and not backwoodsmen, they too must have horses and chariots. They did not own them; consequently they sent embassies down to Egypt to borrow them. Because they were awkward in driving these chariots and must go away from their own familiar ground in order to use them, they were almost sure to be defeated in any contest with expert horsemen. How fine the war horses were in those days is shown by pictures of them on the old Assyrian sculptures and by such a description as is given in the thirty-ninth chapter of the Book of Job.

Hast thou given the horse his might?
Hast thou clothed his neck with the quivering mane?
Hast thou made him to leap as a locust?
The glory of his snorting is terrible.
He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength:
He goeth out to meet the armed men.
He mocketh at fear, and is not dismayed;
Neither turneth he back from the sword.
He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage;
Neither standeth he still at the voice of the trumpet.
As oft as the trumpet soundeth he saith, Aha!
And he smelleth the battle afar off,
The thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

To manage such a war horse would take much skill. Isaiah knew his countrymen could not compete with their enemies in that art of war. So it was that in a very serious crisis in Israel's history Isaiah did his best to keep the king from yielding to the false counselors of his court, who tried to persuade him to send down to Egypt and hire horses and chariots with which to fight the Assyrians. He warned them to stay at home and be quiet, and trust to their natural defenses and in the God of the hills whom they worshiped up in Mount Zion. If they were foolish enough to try a new art of warfare, they would soon be fleeing in disgrace before their pursuers, mowed down so fast that what was left of them would be like a lonely pole sticking upon a barren hilltop. But if they stayed at home and trusted the Lord, he would be like a lion protecting them or an eagle hovering over her mountain nest.

For thus the Lord Jehovah, Israel's Holy One, saith,
By sitting still and remaining quiet ye shall be delivered,
In resting and trusting shall your strength consist.
But ye refused, and said, Nay,
On steeds will we speed; therefore ye shall speed in flight!
And, On swift steeds will we ride. Therefore your pursuers shall be swift!
Each thousand shall flee at the war-cry of one.
From the war-cry of five ye shall flee, till ye are but a remnant,
Like a pole on the top of a mountain and like a signal on a hill.[1]
.
Woe unto those that go down to Egypt for help,
Who rely on horses and trust in chariots because they are many,
And in horsemen because they are very strong,
But have not looked unto the Holy One of Israel, and have not consulted Jehovah.

[1] Isa. xxx, 15–17, Kent's translation in "Student's Old Testament."

Now, the Eygptians are men and not God,
And their horses flesh and not spirit;
And if Jehovah stretch out his hand,
He that helpeth will stumble,
And he that is helped will fall,
And they all will be consumed together.
For thus saith Jehovah unto me,
As the lion with the young lion growleth over his prey,
Against whom there is called a troop of shepherds, —
(At their shouting he is not terrified,
And at their noise he is not daunted)
So shall Jehovah of hosts come down to battle upon the Mount and hill of Zion.
Like birds hovering, so shall Jehovah of hosts shelter Jerusalem,
Sheltering and delivering, passing over and rescuing.[1]

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SELECTION IV. THE ATTRACTIONS OF THE PLAIN

Samson and the Wheat Fields

Judges xv, 4–17

The Maritime Plain, the little strip of level land on the coast south of Mount Carmel, from eight to fifteen miles wide, is the most attractive part of the country. It is very fertile and easily cultivated, with a delightful climate like that of southern France, warm enough for such fruit trees as the orange and the apricot, with beautiful waving fields of wheat. As one looks out over the landscape in the summer months it appears like a sea of dead-ripe grain waving in the breeze. This portion of Palestine was picked out very early by settlers from the northwest, called Philistines. They did not belong to the same race as the Hebrews, for the Hebrews were Semites from the east. The Philistines were of the Aryan race, which includes the Greeks and Romans, the Celts, the Anglo-Saxons, and ourselves. Perhaps originally they had lived on the island of Crete in the Mediterranean Sea, and had been adventurous enough to skirt its coasts and find this fertile little strip on the shore of Palestine; for the Aryans were more daring than the Semites and pushed their way into new lands more readily. It is from the name of these people that the word *Palestine* comes, the Greeks calling



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PLOWING IN THE FIELDS OF SHARON

that little eastern strip along the Mediterranean *Palaistinē*, or the land where the Philistines lived. The Romans changed it to *Palestina* and we to *Palestine.*] These people built a number of fortified cities on the plain; Gaza was one, Ashkelon another. We hear a great deal about these cities and how hard they were to conquer, for the Philistines were fighters.[Goliath, the big giant whom David met with his sling, was a Philistine. When Alexander the Great, himself a Greek with the same Aryan blood in his veins, came down the coast conquering everything before him, he had to stop a long time before the people of Gaza would give in.

[These Philistines were in the plain when the Israelites came back from Egypt, and were an endless amount of trouble to them, for the Israelites could not drive them out, and every once in a while the Philistines would make a raid upon the Hebrews, taking away their crops and destroying their villages, and at one time taking off all their forges so that they had no means of sharpening their swords. If they wanted to sharpen their agricultural implements even, they had to go down to some village of the Philistines to do it.[1] This was very humiliating to the Hebrews, and Saul and David spent much of their time in battles with the Philistines, driving them back away from the hills down into their own country on the plain. But before the time of Saul and David, when the Israelites first tried to get possession of the country, they did not know how strong these people were, and when the land was portioned out to the various tribes, one tribe, Dan, chose a piece of the coast plain. It certainly looked

[1] 1 Sam. xiii, 19–23.

most attractive, and they started to settle there. Between the plain and the high mountains of Jerusalem are some low hills, the halfway ground, the highlands, with valleys where mountain brooks rush down after the heavy rains of fall and spring, and where there used to be good hunting. It was here that the Danites got their first foothold and settled in a few villages. In one of these villages, Zorah, there was a very athletic boy named Samson, who became famous for his strength. He could "do stunts" that would startle even the most accomplished athlete of the present day, and so remarkable were the stories of his feats, which were handed down from father to son, that he became the great athletic hero of Hebrew literature. Some of the most interesting hero stories of the days of the Judges are about this young man Samson, and the hill country of that region is now called "the Samson Country." But the attractions of the plain farther down were a constant temptation to the Danites. They tried their best to win it away from the Philistines but were always defeated, and gave up the struggle in disgust. Then they struck away north as far as they could get, and conquered a city named Laish up in the Lebanons, changing its name to Dan. After this the phrase "from Dan to Beersheba" meant the whole length of the land from Dan in the extreme north to Beersheba in the extreme south.

But it was while the Danites were still fighting for their territory on the seacoast that Samson appeared as their champion. The lure of the Philistines was great for him as well as for all his tribe, and he used to go down to a near-by village, Timnah, to see a girl whom he wanted for his wife. But one day they quarreled, and when he went

back after a while to make it up, he found her father had married her to some one else. This made him very angry, and so he caught a great number of foxes (or more likely they were jackals, an animal very much like the fox), tying their tails together, with firebrands between, and sending them running frantically through the dry grainfields of the Philistines. These jackals are very numerous in Palestine still, making night hideous with their howls. One traveler thus describes a concert of jackals: "You may be serenaded by them every night, but they are particularly musical in the fiercest storms. Deliver me from their music. I was terrified. It began in a sort of solo; a low, long-drawn wail, rising and swelling higher and higher until it quite overtopped the wind; and just when it was about to choke off in utter despair, it was reënforced by many others, yelling, screaming, barking, wailing, as if a whole legion of demons were fighting." Some of the boys on western ranches know the howling of the coyote, but the barking of the coyote is nothing to the yelling jackal. They differ from the fox because they hunt in packs instead of prowling about singly for their prey. They are accustomed to run side by side, so that if their tails were tied together they would not pull in opposite directions as foxes would probably do, but Samson's firebrands dragging behind would set the fields afire in a hundred and fifty places. It was a wicked thing to do, considered a criminal offense even in those barbarous times, for a very ancient law has come down to the Arabs of the present day, not to set fire to standing grain or the bush belonging to another man. The punishment which they prescribe is nothing short of death even if the fire is an accident.

But Samson had his revenge. After it was done, however, his countrymen were very angry with him because he had so enraged the Philistines, who were their enemies. To appease them he let them bind him with cords and hand him over to the enemy, and then the story goes on to say that before them all he broke the cords as if they had been burnt string, and seizing the jawbone of a dead ass lying near, he rushed at the surprised crowd, laying about him right and left and slaying a thousand men.

From this old hero story the Hebrews made a rhyme which was based upon a pun, the Hebrew words for "ass" and "mass" sounding the same.

> With the jawbone of an ass have I massed a mass;
> With the jawbone of an ass have I slain a thousand.[1]

Punning is a coarse kind of humor, but the surprise of it always makes us smile. Riddles and conundrums are based largely on puns. The Samson riddles are among the earliest forms of Hebrew literature, and the Hebrews always enjoyed a play on words.

Samson was afterwards taken captive in Gaza, and his eyes were put out. The revenge he sought then was to break down the pillars of the great temple in that city, when it was full of people at a feast. The Philistines were too strong for Samson, as they were for his whole tribe, but the story of his great deeds and the pity of his slavery forms an interesting part of Bible story, and was incorporated into English literature by no less a poet than Milton.

> To grind in brazen fetters under task,
> Eyeless, in Gaza, at the mill with slaves!
> Oh, change beyond report, thought or belief!

[1] Gordon's translation in "Poets of the Old Testament."

Can this be he
Who tore the lion as the lion tears the kid?

Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,
The jaw of a dead ass his sword of bone,
A thousand foreskins fell, the flower of Palestine.

And Samson went and caught three hundred jackals, and took torches, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between every two tails. And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks and the standing grain, and also the oliveyards. Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they said, Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he hath taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire. And Samson said unto them, If ye do after this manner, surely I will be avenged of you, and after that I will cease. And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

Then the Philistines went up and encamped in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi. And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us? And they said, To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us. Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? what then is this that thou hast done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them. And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves. And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand: but surely we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new ropes, and brought him up from the rock.

When he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted as they met him: and the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him, and the ropes that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and

his bands dropped from off his hands. And he found a fresh jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand and took it, and smote a thousand men therewith. And Samson said,

> With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps,
> With the jawbone of an ass have I smitten a thousand men.

And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand; and that place was called the hill of the jawbone.[1]

The Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley

Song of Songs ii, 1 (Canticle of Canticles ii, 1, Douay)

North of this "Samson Country" and the Plain of the Philistines lies the Plain of Sharon, sung into Hebrew literature by the familiar verse in the Song of Songs,

> I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley.

This plain is below Mount Carmel, extending toward Joppa fifty miles, and is most luxuriant with fruit and flowers. Frosts are here unknown, and the rains and dews very copious. The particular flower mentioned in the Song of Songs as the rose of Sharon is by some supposed to be the rockrose found on Mount Carmel, although it is probably our narcissus, which is very beautiful and abundant here. The lily of the valley mentioned so many times in the Song was probably the anemone, the most abundant and conspicuous flower to be found in Palestine. The blossoms are of several different colors, — lilac, white, and red, — but the one most frequently seen is the brilliant scarlet. It is a gorgeous sight to see a field of

[1] American Revised Version, with marginal readings.

these anemones, spread out before us like a gayly colored carpet. They grow everywhere on the hills and in the plains, by the shores of the lake and in the crevices of the rocks, but nowhere are they more beautiful than on the Plain of Sharon, where they are scattered luxuriantly over those broad fields. This was doubtless the flower that Jesus plucked and held up before his audience when he said,

> Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.[1]

A plant somewhat like our foxglove covers wide acres of the Plain of Sharon. Around Jaffa (or Joppa) there grow the most fruitful orange groves, the oranges selling for half a cent apiece. Just south of Carmel there are evidences showing that oak forests stood there in ancient times. There are three kinds of oaks in Palestine, and they are often mentioned in the Bible. The traditional oak of Abraham down in Hebron[2] and the one upon which Absalom caught his hair[3] are among the most famous single trees, but the oak forests of the plateau of Gilead, east of Jordan, and of the Plain of Sharon were doubtless among the most delightful stretches of wooded country Palestine then contained. These old oak woods of Sharon have for the most part disappeared; scrub oaks now take their place. North of Carmel is the Plain of Acre, where flowers and birds flourish in the springtime. Flowers of all sorts are here, too numerous to be counted. Some of the most conspicuous of them are flowers that we prize in our own gardens. Anemones and brilliant poppies and the

[1] Matt. vi, 28, 29; Luke xii, 27. [2] Gen. xxiii, 17.
[3] 2 Sam. xviii, 9.

orchises which we consider so rare are the most common flowers, and the air is fragrant with the perfume from the sweet wild hyacinths. The birds too are as joyous as the flowers, singing their hearts out for the delight of living. East of Carmel is the Plain of Esdraelon, the great granary of Palestine, with the river Kishon flowing through it northwestward to the Mediterranean Sea. Such are the attractions of the plains in contrast to the bleak hills of Judea, but it was on the hills that the greatest thoughts were born.

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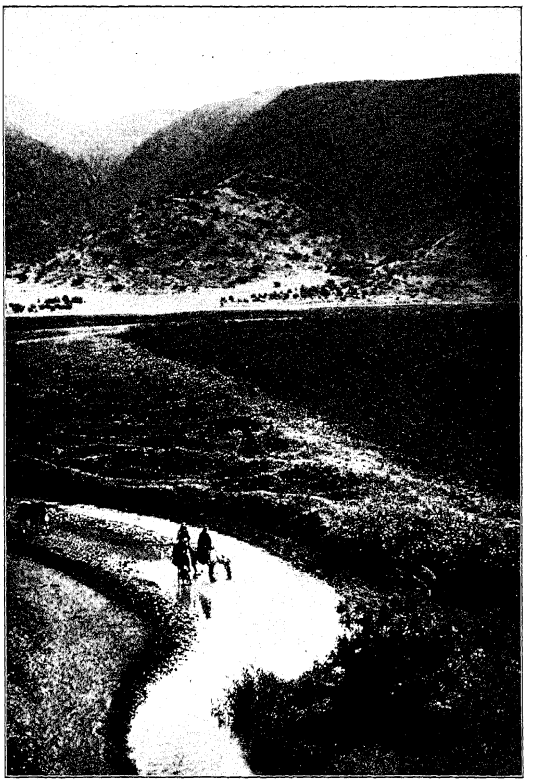
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For other plants on the Plain of Sharon see the above-mentioned books and

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THE RIVER KISHON AND THE OLD BATTLEGROUND

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SELECTION V. THE RIVER KISHON AND DEBORAH'S SONG

Judges v

Rivers are comparatively few in Palestine. There is the one long river, the Jordan, running north and south, having its source up in the Lebanons and ending in the Dead Sea. There are three short ones running at right angles from the east side, two into the Jordan and one into the Dead Sea. These are the Yarmuk, the Jabbok, and the Arnon. Then there is another which rises in the eastern hills of Samaria just west of the Jordan and, flowing northwestward through the fertile Plain of Esdraelon, empties into the Mediterranean under the brow of Mt. Carmel. This is the Kishon, and it played a very important part on a certain day in one of the great battles of Israel. Indeed, in the plain through which this river runs there is one of the oldest battlefields of the world's history. Here in this middle ground between Asia and Africa many armies have gathered to fight out their quarrels, because it was halfway ground and because the valley here stretches out for many miles between the hills on either side, where chariots and horses as well as men would have a chance to spread themselves out.

The river Kishon is a very peculiar stream. It flows along its crooked course quite sluggishly in the summertime, in some places hardly to be seen, while in the winter,

when the heavy rains fall, it becomes a raging torrent, overflowing its banks and making a sticky mud that is almost impossible to cross. Often at such times animals and baggage have disappeared from sight.

Now there was a time in Israel's history when the whole country was in a very confused state, when the Canaanites as well as the Philistines were doing their best to make it hard for the Hebrews and to drive them out of the land. The Canaanites, of course, were the first settlers. They came to Palestine long before Abraham was born, perhaps as many as two thousand years before. The land was named Canaan for them, and naturally they thought it belonged to them, and resented the newcomers as interlopers, just as our American Indians resented the encroachments of the Europeans. But the Israelites believed this country had been promised to them, and when they at last escaped from slavery down in Egypt, they crossed the Jordan under Joshua's lead, thinking it would be a short matter to take possession of the land. But it was not so easy as they thought. The Canaanites lived in walled villages and had chariots and horses to fight with. The Israelites must fight on foot and were not well organized. When they had first come in sight of the Promised Land, two of the tribes and a part of another asked the special privilege of remaining on the east side of the Jordan, where there was good pasture for their flocks. They promised faithfully to come over the river and help the rest fight their battles in time of need. But after a while they found it easier to stay at home, and some of the other tribes, too, were very selfish in the way they forgot to look after anyone's interests but their own.

These twelve tribes were somewhat like our colonies in early American history, or, more truly, like the Scottish clans at the time Walter Scott was writing about in "The Lady of the Lake." You remember that when Roderick Dhu wanted to marshal the clans together for a fight, he killed a goat and had the priest dip the ends of a cross in its blood, pronouncing a curse upon every clan which should fail to heed the signal and rally around the chieftain.

> Then Roderick with impatient look
> From Brian's hand the symbol took:
> "Speed, Malise, speed!" he said, and gave
> The crosslet to his henchman brave.
> "The muster-place be Lanrick mead—
> Instant the time—speed, Malise, speed!"

Some such message as that was sent to the tribes of Israel by Deborah, the famous woman judge of the Hebrews, when she saw there must be a battle with their old-time enemy, the Canaanites. Some of the tribes listened and some of them did not. The Reubenites who tended their flocks over on the east side of the Jordan had "great searchings of heart," we are told, but decided, after all, to stay at home and watch their sheep. The tribes that were on the seacoast had nothing to fear either, and so they "sat still on the shore." There was likewise a village, called Meroz, where the inhabitants refused to help at all, and thus brought down upon themselves a heavy curse.

But some of the tribes "risked their lives to the death" and earned Deborah's deepest gratitude. In her song she says,

> My heart is towards the leaders of Israel,
> That offered themselves willingly among the people.

Deborah was a wonderful woman. Those were days when the Canaanites were so troublesome that the Israelites did not dare to travel the highroad for fear of being robbed or murdered, and so they skulked from place to place along bypaths. No man was brave enough to come out boldly and rally the people for war. But they all knew there was this very wise woman up in the hill country of Ephraim, and so when they had any special trouble they came to her for advice. Finally she saw that the only way out of their difficulties was for them all to get together and fight the Canaanites unitedly. Therefore she sent for a man she knew, named Barak, and told him to gather as many men as he could on the slope of Mount Tabor, which is at the head of the plain through which the river Kishon flows. He succeeded in getting ten thousand together. They were on foot, and the enemy was down below in the valley with nine hundred chariots of iron. The Israelites had the advantage of position, but even so, had it not been for a most providential occurrence, they might have been defeated. Deborah says in her song that heaven fought for them, and so it did, for there was a great rain that day, perhaps the first of the winter rains, which is called "the pourer." The river suddenly overflowed its banks, and Sisera and his chariots were hopelessly stuck in the mud. Of course this made an occasion for a very triumphant exultation in the song. Deborah cries out at this crisis of the battle,

O my soul, march on with strength!

Then she describes the plunging and stamping of the horses as they pulled themselves out of the mud and

galloped away. We have learned already that the Hebrew poets were very fond of the figure of speech called onomatopœia, or the imitation of sounds by words. We find it true in this very early song.

> Then pounded the hoofs of the horses,
> With the gallop, the gallop of strong ones,
> And the river of Kishon swept them away,
> The on-rushing river of Kishon.[1]

The Hebrew word for "gallop" is *daharoth*, which, if repeated several times, sounds like the pounding of horses' hoofs on a road.

In the midst of all this commotion Sisera, the captain of the Canaanites, escaped on foot. He hurried as fast as he could away from the scene, expecting any moment to be caught as a fugitive and killed. After he had succeeded in putting thirty miles or more between himself and the battlefield he thought it was safe to rest a bit, so exhausted was he with his run. He saw a tent in the distance, which he recognized as the home of a friend of his, Heber, the Kenite. At least, he supposed he was a friend, for, although an Israelite, Heber had adopted the policy of peace with his neighbors the Canaanites. But Sisera did not count rightly upon Heber's wife, Jael, for she was loyal as she could be to her own kith and kin. She saw her chance when Sisera hastened to the door of the tent and asked if he might get a drink and rest a little while. Most hospitably she received him, bringing out milk instead of water and pouring it into her choicest bowl. She had him lie down and covered him with a rug. Then,

[1] Gordon's translation in "Poets of the Old Testament."

when he had fallen fast asleep in his weariness, she pulled up one of the tent-pins and, taking a hammer, stole up softly to his couch and drove the pin through his temple. That was the end of Sisera and the end of the conflict with the Canaanites.

But there was one more scene to follow, which Deborah depicts most graphically and, we cannot help feeling, with delight. At Sisera's home his mother was waiting for him at nightfall. There was not a question in her mind but that he would gain an easy victory over those poor, half-organized Israelites, and that he would bring home captive maidens and spoil in abundance for all the household. But he did not come and did not come, and as she peered out of the window in the twilight and strained her ears to hear the first sound of his chariot wheels, she made up many excuses for the long delay of her son, who never came.

This is the climax of the poem, and one can feel the exultation of Deborah and the Israelites as they learned the fate of Sisera and the day's triumph. It was a wild and barbarous age. Jael, in her ferocious revengefulness, may be compared to Boadicea of Britain, and the far-sighted, courageous Deborah—prophet, poet, and heroine of Israel—to the great heroine of France, Joan of Arc.

There are two accounts of this story—one in prose, in Judges iv, and the poem of Judges v. The poem is doubtless the older; indeed, it is probably the very oldest complete piece of literature which the Bible contains. It is supposed to have been taken from a very old Book of War Ballads referred to in the Old Testament but lost to us. "We count ourselves fortunate," says Professor Fowler, "that this one has been preserved." And Dr. Gordon, in

his "Poets of the Old Testament," says it is "a song that for force and fire is worthy to be placed alongside the noblest battle odes in any language."

Deborah's Song

The Theme Announced

For that the leaders took the lead in Israel,
For that the people offered themselves willingly,
Bless ye Jehovah —

Historical Prelude

Hear, O ye kings;
Give ear, O ye princes,
I, even I, will sing unto Jehovah,
I will sing praise to Jehovah, the God of Israel.
Jehovah, when thou wentest forth out of Seir,
When thou marchedst out of the field of Edom,
The earth trembled, the heavens also dropped,
Yea, the clouds dropped water.
The mountains quaked at the presence of Jehovah,
Even yon Sinai at the presence of Jehovah, the God of Israel.[1]

Description of Israel's Sad Estate before the Battle .

In the days of Shamgar ben-Anath, the high roads were deserted
And travelers went by winding paths.
Still lay the villages in Israel,
And hushed was the work of the country-folk,

[1] This refers to some great earthquake and storm during the wanderings of the Israelites, revealing God's majesty and strength. "In words that flash and roll the song describes the glorious advent of the Most High, nature astir with his presence, the mountains shaking under his tread." Compare a passage in Greek literature (Hesiod):

Great Olympus trembled beneath the immortal feet.

(See Expositor's and Cambridge Bibles.)

No shield was seen, or spear,
'Mong the forty thousands in Israel —
Until that I, Deborah, arose,
That I arose, a mother in Israel.

Return to the Theme of the Poem (a Refrain of Gratitude)

My heart is toward the leaders of Israel
That offered themselves willingly among the people.
Bless ye Jehovah —
Tell of it, ye that ride on white asses,[1]
Ye that sit on rich carpets,
And ye that walk by the way: —
Far from the noise of archers,
In the places of drawing water: —
There shall they rehearse Jehovah's righteous acts,
Even the righteous acts of his rule in Israel.

Deborah's Wild War Chant which roused the Hosts of Israel

Awake, awake, Deborah,
Awake, awake, strike up the song!
Up with thee, Barak! put on thy strength
And lead away thy captive train, thou son of Abinoam.

The Muster

So a remnant went down against the powerful,
The people of Jehovah went down against the mighty:
From Ephraim they rushed forth into the valley,
His brother Benjamin among the ranks;
From Machir went down commanders,
And from Zebulon those who carry the marshal's staff,
Men of Issachar marched with Deborah,
And men of Naphtali with Barak;

[1] Rulers rode on white asses. This verse calls on both rich and poor to tell the story. They are to tell it by the wells, the gathering places of the people.

Into the valley they rushed forth in his steps.
By the brooks of Reuben
There were great resolves of heart.
Then why didst thou stay by the sheep-folds
To list to the pipings for flocks?
By the brooks of Reuben
There were deep searchings of heart!
Gilead abode beyond Jordan,
And Dan sat still by the ships,
Asher stayed on the seashore,
Quietly abode by his havens,
But Zebulon — he flung his soul to the death
With Naphtali on the heights of the field.

The Battle and Rout

The kings came and fought;
Then fought the kings of Canaan,
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo:[1]
They took no gain of money.
From heaven fought the stars,
From their courses fought against Sisera.
The river Kishon swept them away,
The ancient river, the river Kishon.
O my soul, march on with strength!
Then pounded the hoofs of the horses,
With the galloping, galloping of their powerful steeds.

The Curse against Meroz[2]

Curse ye Meroz, saith Jehovah,
With curses curse its inhabitants,
For they came not to the help of Jehovah,
To the help of Jehovah among the brave.

[1] The ancient battlefield.

[2] Meroz was probably a village through which Sisera ran on his road home.

The Retribution

Most blessed of women be Jael,
That wife of Heber the Kenite,
Most blessed of nomad women be.
Water he asked and milk she gave,
Buttermilk brought in a lordly bowl.
She put her hand to the tent-pin
And her right hand to the workman's hammer,
And she struck Sisera, she crushed his head,
Smashed on him, pierced through his temple.
At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay;
At her feet he bowed, he fell;
Where he bowed, there he fell down dead!

The Last Scene

Through the window she peered and loudly cried,
The mother of Sisera, through the lattice,
"Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?"
The wisest of her ladies answered her,
Yea, she answered her own question,
"Are they not finding, dividing the spoil?
A damsel or two for each warrior,
A spoil of dyed stuff for Sisera,
A spoil of dyed stuffs embroidered,
A piece or two of embroidery for his neck?"

Conclusion

So let all thine enemies perish, O Jehovah;
But they that love him shall be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might!

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR THE TEACHER OR CLASS

For the rivers Jordan, Kishon, Yarmuk, Jabbok, and Arnon, see Bible dictionaries.

For translations, suggestions in the division of the poem, and comments, see

American Revised Version.

GORDON. The Poets of the Old Testament.

FOWLER. The History of the Literature of Ancient Israel.

MOORE, GEORGE FOOT. The International Critical Commentary, volume, "Judges."

KENT. The Student's Old Testament, "Beginnings of Hebrew History." Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. $2.75.

MOULTON. The Modern Reader's Bible.

SELECTION VI. MOUNT CARMEL AND ELIJAH THE TISHBITE

1 Kings xviii, 16–40 (3 Kings xviii, 16–40, Douay)

The Plain of Sharon joins the Philistine Plain on the south, the Plain of Acre runs into Phœnicia on the north. In between lies Mount Carmel. These plains were the most attractive part of Palestine, and people had settled there long before the Hebrews arrived in the land. Perhaps some two thousand years before Abraham ever left Ur of the Chaldees, distant cousins of his had already traveled northwest from Arabia and established themselves along the coast and in the lowlands. Indeed, the name *Canaan* is supposed to mean "lowlands," and the Canaanites, therefore, took their name from the character of the place where they first settled, just as the Scottish Highlanders did. These lowlanders developed a civilization in villages and cities, with extensive commercial interests, long before the Hebrews had outgrown their nomadic habits. The people of Tyre and Sidon, the two great cities of Phœnicia, were the "Yankee peddlers of those olden times," and as such were well known to the Greeks of Homer's age. In the fifteenth book of the Odyssey the story of Menelaus describes

> A ship of Sidon anchor'd in our port,
> Freighted with toys of every sort—
> With gold and amber chains,

and "fierce Achilles" was clad in Sidonian purple. This Sidonian, or Tyrian, purple was far-famed; it was made from the shell of a fish abounding on this coast. To-day the traveler walking up the beach along the Plain of Acre finds it strewn with beautiful shells, and among them the spiny ones of this same fish; but the art of making the purple dye is lost now.

It was from the Phœnicians that Europe received the art of alphabetic writing. They were also the first nation to send out colonists, for it was the Phœnicians who founded Carthage, so celebrated in Virgil; and from Carthage came Hannibal, one of the three great generals of the Semitic race.[1] It was from Phœnician Tyre that Solomon bought the lumber and borrowed the designs and the artificers for the great temple at Jerusalem.[2] The prophet Isaiah tells us that these merchantmen were the real rulers of nations at one time, their money power controlling kings.[3] But their worldly greatness was developed at the expense of something higher and nobler. They were more adventurous than their cousins the Hebrews, had made a few inventions and discoveries, and had gained much wealth. This led to luxurious, self-indulgent living and resulted in a religion of a very low grade.

The original Semitic religion was a very pure nature worship; the sun and moon and stars had called out the

[1] The other two were Tiglath-pileser, the Assyrian, and Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian. For contrast between the Aryan and the Semitic genius, see James F. McCurdy, History, Prophecy and the Monuments.

[2] The Hebrews did not show originality in their architecture or in sculpture and painting, as did their neighbors, the Assyrians, Egyptians, and Greeks, and to a very slight degree the Phœnicians. The fine art which absorbed their originality was poetry.

[3] Isa. xxiii, 8.

admiration and reverence of those early nomads, living in the open and traveling so much by night; and when they settled down in the city of Ur they built a temple to the moon, believing there must be some great mysterious power behind the night. The priests used to ascend to the top of the temple every night to observe the stars, singing a hymn at midnight before they came down. This was the beginning of astronomy, and such worship was the seed of noble thoughts and deep reverential feeling. Another city worshiped the sun, and such hymns as the following formed part of their worship, scarcely below some of our own poetry in loftiness of thought.

O lord, illuminator of darkness, who revealest the face of heaven,
Merciful God, who dost lift up the lowly, protect the weak.

To thy light all the great gods look up.
All the Annunaki look up to thee.

All mankind thou guidest like a single being;
Expectantly, with raised head they look up to the sunlight.

When thou dost appear, they rejoice and exult;
Thou art the light for the most distant ends of the heavens.

The standard for the wide earth,
The multitudes look up to thee with joy.

But down in Phœnicia the purer forms of nature worship had deteriorated sadly into a superstitious fear of unseen spirits, which the people believed inhabited rocks and springs and trees as well as the heavens. These spirits were called Baals or Baalim, and their priests performed all sorts of barbarous rites to appease their anger, even resorting to cutting themselves with knives in order to

awaken the interest and compassion of these gods. It was very easy for the Israelites to fall into the same superstitious feelings when they associated with these people. The ease and luxury of life on the lowlands were not conducive to the plain living and high thinking of life in the hills. The pure worship of the one spiritual God, Jehovah, degenerated to the level of heathendom; and when king Ahab married Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Tyre, who became the ruling spirit of Northern Israel, she brought her gods with her and hundreds of priests of Baal into the land.

The great prophets came from the hills and the desert, those high and lonely places where they thought out profoundly the steps in true, reverential religious conceptions. Abraham did this on Mount Moriah and Moses by the burning bush, Amos in the wilderness of Tekoa and Isaiah on Mount Zion. The first great prophet after the Hebrews returned from Egypt was Elijah. He came from Gilead near the desert and was half nomad—an interesting person clothed in skins and wearing a girdle of leather.[1] The modern fellah of the desert, with his leathern girdle and hairy breast and arms, is said to be the exact portrait of Elijah the Tishbite of old. This strange man Elijah would suddenly appear and just as suddenly disappear, daring to walk right into the presence of the king himself and deliver his message without warning and without wavering. He was an epoch-making character, and the stories that have come down to us about him are great stories. Here we have just the right kind of hero to stir the imagination of primitive people. He was enveloped in mystery,

[1] 2 Kings i, 8.

appearing unannounced from somewhere, no one knew just where; vanishing abruptly; never saying "by your leave" for anything he did; of wonderful physical strength and endurance, outrunning the king's chariot for a stretch of twelve miles; on briefest notice putting a hundred miles between himself and the wrath of the queen; enduring the long siege of famine with the help of the ravens and a little trickling brook with which he alone was acquainted.[1]

Elijah's message to the people was that Jehovah, the spiritual God of Moses and Samuel and David, was the only true God, that the Baalim were false gods, and that the children of Israel were doing wickedly to indulge in such superstitious worship, which led to ignoble rather than lofty thoughts. Elijah was even bold enough one day to challenge these priests of Baal to a religious duel. He led them with a crowd of people up to Mount Carmel, the high promontory lying between the plains and overlooking them. There he called upon his God and they called upon their gods, to see which one would really answer. He knew his God was real and controlled the lightning, and so he quietly waited until the evening and with contemptuous sarcasm mocked the priests of Baal, who resorted to slashing themselves with knives and lances and screaming to their gods, in order to attract their attention. Tennyson thus describes this scene, in his "Palace of Art":

> One was the Tishbite whom the raven fed,
> As when he stood on Carmel-steeps
> With one arm stretch'd out bare, and mock'd and said,
> 'Come, cry aloud — he sleeps!'

[1] 1 Kings xvii, 1–7; xviii, 45; xix, 1–4.

Tall, eager, lean, and strong, his cloak wind-borne
Behind, his forehead heavenly-bright
From the clear marble pouring glorious scorn,
Lit as with inner light.

Mount Carmel, the scene of this famous story, stands out on the coast—a solitary sentinel looking over the sea. On Mount Carmel the grateful moisture of the clouds first descends. There fall the first and the best of the rains, before they are dried up by the thirsty land, and so the mountain is clothed in green the year round. Its very name means "the Garden," and in ancient times vineyards and orchards adorned its slopes. The Old Testament writers constantly used it as the figure of human beauty or the symbol of God's lavish bounty. To-day the mountain is mostly a wild, open jungle, but a little imagination can easily restore the picture of "the excellency of Carmel." This "high place" had long been used as a sanctuary, and now Jehovah and Baal both claimed it. Commanding a view of the whole land (north, of Mount Hermon; east, over the wheat fields of Esdraelon; south, over the orchards of Sharon to the hills of Samaria), it was a fitting place for the followers of two rival deities to settle their dispute. "The awful debate, whether Jehovah or Baal was supreme lord of the elements, was fought out for a full day in face of one of the most sublime prospects of earth and sea and heaven. . . . It was in the face of that miniature universe that the Deity who was character was vindicated as Lord, against the Deity who was not."[1]

So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah. And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that

[1] Smith, Historical Geography of the Holy Land, pp. 340, 341.

Ahab said unto him, Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of Jehovah, and thou hast followed the Baalim. Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the Asherah four hundred, that eat at Jezebel's table.

So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto Mount Carmel. And Elijah came near unto all the people, and said, How long go ye limping between the two sides? if Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, am left a prophet of Jehovah; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under. And call ye on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of Jehovah: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under. And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped about the altar which was made. And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud; for he is a god: either he is musing, or he is gone aside, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked. And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lances, till the blood gushed out upon them. And it was so, when midday was past, that they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening oblation; but there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me; and all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of Jehovah

that was thrown down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of Jehovah came, saying, Israel shall be thy name. And with the stones he built an altar in the name of Jehovah; and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid it on the wood. And he said, Fill four jars with water, and pour it on the burnt-offering, and on the wood. And he said, Do it the second time; and they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time; and they did it the third time. And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening oblation, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, O Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Jehovah, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Jehovah, art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of Jehovah fell, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God. And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR THE TEACHER OR CLASS

For Mount Carmel, the Plain of Acre, and Tyre and Sidon, see

SMITH. Historical Geography of the Holy Land.
KENT. Biblical Geography and History.
HUNTINGTON. Palestine and its Transformation.
THOMSON. The Land and the Book.
HAZARD. A Brief Pilgrimage in the Holy Land.
BAEDEKER. Palestine and Syria.
Bible dictionaries.

For Tyrian purple, see

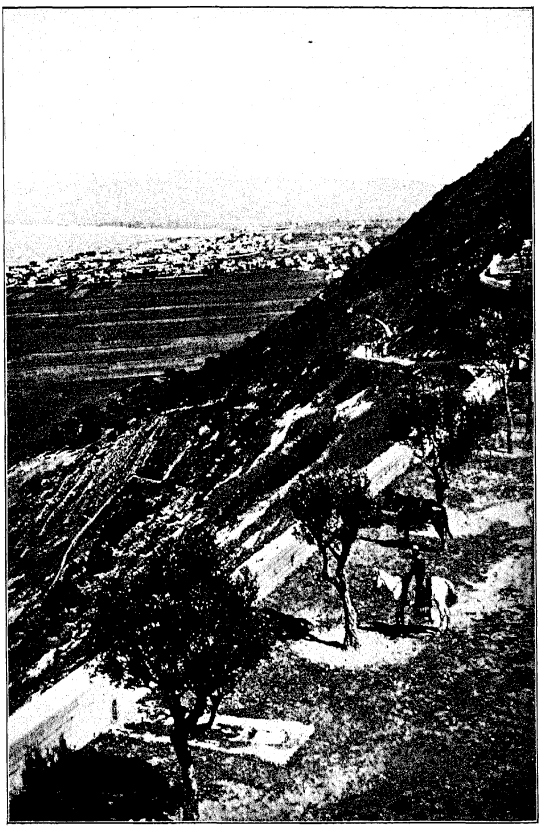
BAEDEKER. Palestine and Syria.

For nature worship and the Baalim, see

Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics, art. "Baal."
SMITH. Historical Geography of the Holy Land.

For Elijah and his character, see

FOWLER. History of the Literature of Ancient Israel.
Bible dictionaries.



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MT. CARMEL AND THE PLAIN OF ACRE

SELECTION VII. MOUNT CARMEL AND THE RAINS

1 Kings xvii, 1–7 (3 Kings xvii, 1–7, Douay); 1 Kings xviii, 1, 2, 5, 6, 41–46 (3 Kings xviii, 1, 2, 5, 6, 41–46, Douay)

Mount Carmel is one of the most significant parts of the Holy Land, the most striking natural feature on the western side of Palestine, the one bold headland jutting out into the Mediterranean. It is eighteen hundred and ten feet high at its highest point near the sea, running southeast and northwest for about twelve miles and sloping gradually downward. From its summit there is a magnificent view of the whole land. It gathers the moisture freely because of its height and situation near the sea. Owing to the heavy dew which falls every night Mount Carmel is one of the few spots in Palestine that remain green throughout the whole year. A perfect garden of foliage lifting itself above the wheat fields of the plain, with vineyards and orchards and groves of oaks, it was to the imagination of the Hebrew poet like the Ideal Maiden's tresses:

> Thy waist is like a heap of wheat
> Set about with lilies.
> Thy head upon thee is like Carmel
> And the hair of thy head like purple;
> The king is held captive in the tresses thereof.
> How fair and how pleasant art thou,
> O love, for delights![1]

[1] Song of Songs vii, 2, 5, 6.

It became a symbol of fertility and blessing, of the kind of prosperity Israel longed for, sure and constant amidst the great variableness of the fickle climate, the frequent droughts, and the fear of famine. It stood out much more prominently than the lowlands as the Hebrew ideal of the Land of Heart's Desire, for it was high up, affording visions, so dear to the best life and thought of the nation. It was always a sacred retreat; even before the Hebrews found it, its caverns and oak groves offered seclusion for those who wished to meditate. Here Elijah brought the people to try to raise their thoughts of God above the common level,[1] and here the Shunammite woman knew she would find Elisha when she was in distress.[2] To-day there is a monastery on the mountain, harboring eighteen or twenty Carmelite monks. This order, which took its name from Carmel itself, sprang up in the twelfth century, was confirmed by the Pope, and spread over Europe.

But the visions of the Hebrew prophets were not of the type of spirituality divorced from things of earth which the Middle Ages cherished. Heaven and earth were very close to each other in the Hebrew mind, and their conception of Jehovah was of a great God who cared for the life and health and happiness of his people on earth. Elijah believed this and stood for two great principles: first, that God cares for the rights of the common citizen; and, second, that people should be loyal to such a God. The one involves politics and the other religion; the whole history of the Hebrews was an effort to show that the two could not be separated. Because real happiness on earth is the result of a well-conducted government, the prophets stood

[1] Selection VI. [2] 2 Kings iv.

for civic ethics and became counselors to kings. Because such prosperity is knit up with the economic life of people, they studied not only "the signs of the times" politically, but the signs of nature as well, warning the people to be provident, to plow and sow and harvest as skillful farmers do,[1] to plant their vineyards with care,[2] to build cisterns that did not leak,[3] and not to put their wages into a bag with holes.[4] They believed, indeed, in a great God, a Providence whose thoughts were higher than man's thoughts as the heavens are higher than the earth,[5] but a Providence who helps those who help themselves by reflecting upon nature's ways.

Consequently Elijah was a weather prophet. The economic life of any people depends very largely upon the rain and moisture. Hot, dry winds will very soon occasion drought, spoil crops, and cause famine. All countries are dependent ultimately for their prosperity upon the crops and the crops upon the weather. Many of the fluctuations of Wall Street are due to an abundant wheat crop or a poor yield of corn. Thus business man and farmer and the government in Washington all watch with anxiety the weather bureau. In ancient times they had no weather bureaus to warn the people of a sirocco[6] or a storm from the sea,[7]

[1] Isa. xxviii, 23–29. [3] Isa. xxii, 9–11; Jer. ii, 13; xiv, 3.
[2] Isa. v. [4] Hag. i, 6. [5] Isa. lvii, 8, 9.

[6] "The only dreadful wind in Palestine is the east wind, because it blows from the inland desert and brings excessive heat. The Arabic word for 'east' is *sherk*, and so for 'east wind' the Arab says *sherk-iyeh*. From this we get, by corruption, our word *sirocco* (or *sherokkoh*)." — Grant, The Peasantry of Palestine, p. 25.

[7] "The rain is derived almost entirely from winds blowing in from the Mediterranean Sea." — Huntington, Palestine and its Transformation, p. 36.

but they had the prophets, and they often did as well. At any rate, Elijah could tell what nature had in store, and he was held in great reverence because of this power. He was a man of the desert and knew the indications of those fearful drying east winds. He climbed the summit of Carmel and could tell the first signs of a storm when the west wind blew.

Palestine is one of the countries which have a dry season and a rainy season, like our own Pacific Coast. The winter, from November until April, is the rainy season, and the crops are very dependent upon the heavy rains of fall and spring, "the former and the latter rains," because there is scarcely a drop during the six months of summer. When the winter rains fail there is often a famine, and a succession of several years of drought brings havoc to the people. Such a famine occurred in Ahab's reign — a three years' siege of drought. The king was concerned for himself and his horses and the many priests of Baal whom his wife Jezebel had imported. Elijah was concerned for the welfare of the people; in his estimation a king who did not hold his kingship as a trust for the good of every subject was not worthy to be a king.

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the sojourners of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As Jehovah, the God of Israel, liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. And the word of Jehovah came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before the Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of Jehovah; for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before the Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in

the evening; and he drank of the brook. And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

And it came to pass after many days, that the word of Jehovah came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, Go, show thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth. And Elijah went to show himself unto Ahab. And the famine was sore in Samaria. And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go through the land, unto all the fountains of water and unto all the brooks: peradventure we may find grass and save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts. So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he bowed himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees. And he said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a cloud out of the sea, as small as a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Make ready thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in a little while, that the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel: and the hand of Jehovah was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR THE TEACHER OR CLASS

For the seasons, rains, dews, and winds of Palestine, see

SMITH. Historical Geography of the Holy Land.
KENT. Biblical Geography and History.
HUNTINGTON. Palestine and its Transformation.
BAEDEKER. Palestine and Syria.
GRANT. The Peasantry of Palestine.
Bible dictionaries.

For Elijah and the principles he stood for, see

FOWLER. History of the Literature of Ancient Israel.

SELECTION VIII. THE THUNDERSTORM PSALM

Ps. xxix (xxviii, Douay)

Storms come up very suddenly in Palestine. We know in our own country how after a long, dry period a crashing thunderstorm will break the spell. Often it is accompanied by a wind which does much damage, tearing the trees up by the roots and even taking off the roofs of houses. The Psalmist describes such a storm and the grandeur of it in his land. "Various poetical storm-pieces have come down from oriental antiquity, the most justly celebrated being the description of the oncoming flood in the second Deluge-Tablet and Imru'l-Kais' brilliant picture of the lightning at the close of his Mu'allaka:

'Friend, thou seest the lightning. Mark where it wavereth,
Gleaming like fingers twisted, clasped in the cloud-rivers.
Like a lamp new-lighted, so is the flash of it,
Trimmed by a hermit nightly pouring oil-sesame.'

But neither of these leads us so truly into the living spirit of the storm as the swift, crashing strokes of the Hebrew Psalm."[1]

Nature lovers are not afraid; they often seek a high hill when a storm is gathering, to watch its progress in silent reverence; for a storm is one of the great, awe-inspiring sights of nature. The Hebrew poet was evidently standing on one of the peaks of the Lebanons, where he could watch the clouds gathering over the Mediterranean Sea. He

[1] Gordon, The Poets of the Old Testament.

imagined that those fleecy shapes, piled one above another, were the fitting background for a choir of angels singing "Glory to Jehovah." And so he sang:

Ascribe unto Jehovah, O ye angels of God,
Ascribe unto Jehovah, glory and strength,
Ascribe unto Jehovah the glory due unto his name;
Worship Jehovah in the beauty of holiness.

But blacker and blacker grew the clouds. He could hear the distant roar of their thunder, and he imagined this to be the voice of Jehovah himself above the sea, answering the angels as they praised his power. And so he sang this second stanza:

The voice of Jehovah is upon the waters;
The God of glory thundereth.

Nearer and nearer came the storm, the dark clouds rolling up one on top of another, the thunder growing louder.

Jehovah's voice on the mighty waters!
Jehovah's voice in strength, Jehovah's voice in majesty!

Then suddenly the storm breaks upon the mountains of Lebanon, tearing the great cedars in pieces, breaking off their limbs and sending them scudding down the hillsides as a young calf skips in glee or as young wild animals gambol about. The lightning plays beautifully in the sky, streaking the heavens with light and striking swiftly to the earth.

Jehovah's voice shatters the cedars,
Jehovah shatters the cedars of Lebanon.
He maketh Lebanon to skip like a calf
And Sirion[1] as a young wild ox.
Jehovah's voice cleaveth the rocks,
Jehovah cleaveth them with blade of fire.

[1] Another name for Hermon.

Then as the poet stands there viewing the scene of destruction he sees the storm flee off to the east, the wind licking up the dry sand of the wilderness and whirling it about in great gusts like the dust storms of our prairies.

> Jehovah's voice lasheth the desert,
> Jehovah lasheth the desert of Kadesh.

Looking about him now, he perceives the havoc in the forests where the lightning has struck, where many trees with their bare trunks lie stripped of branches here and there.

> Jehovah's voice shivers the oaks
> And strippeth the forests bare.[1]

After such a storm is over, a remarkable stillness often appears to settle down upon the landscape, a hush and quiet as if the great Creator were whispering peace to every troubled creature, renewing again in every heart faith in the eternal Power that sits supreme over all. And so the poet wrote his final stanza,

> Jehovah sits as King at the storm!
> Yea, Jehovah sitteth as King forever.
> Jehovah will give strength to his people;
> Jehovah will bless his people with peace.[2]

This is more than magnificent imagery and magnificent poetry; it is one of the finest expressions of reverence and faith. The modern note is touched here, for we of the occidental world have learned to some extent to worship God in the open, as people did in ancient times. One of our very modern American poets has recently expressed

[1] Another line has been added here by a later writer using the poem for a temple hymn.

[2] Perhaps the first and last stanzas were added for use in the temple service, but they form a fitting framework for the thought of the poet.

much the same thought as does this Psalm in his little poem "The Place of Peace." [1]

> At the heart of the cyclone tearing the sky
> And flinging the clouds and the towers by,
> Is a place of central calm;
> So here in the roar of mortal things,
> I have a place where my spirit sings,
> In the hollow of God's Palm.

But simply to place the one by the side of the other is sufficient to reveal the exceptional grandeur and dignity, even stateliness, of the Hebrew Psalm compared with the modern poem. "The language of the Psalms nowhere reaches such heights of natural grandeur as in this sublime Song of the Thunders."

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR THE TEACHER OR CLASS

For interpretation of this psalm, see

SMITH. Historical Geography of the Holy Land, chap. iv, "The Scenery of the Land and its Reflection in the Bible," p. 100.
International Critical Commentary, "Psalms."
GORDON. The Poets of the Old Testament.

For the full translation of Imrú'l-Kais' Arabic poem, see

Library of the World's Best Literature, art. "Arabic Literature."

For the worship of God in the open air, see

BRYANT, WILLIAM CULLEN. Forest Hymn.

[1] Edwin Markham.

SELECTION IX. MOUNT HERMON, THE LAND OF SNOW

Prov. xxv, 13; Hos. xiii, 3; Hos. vi, 4; Hos. xiv, 6

"The ascent of Hermon cannot be undertaken before May. The expedition requires a whole day and is very fatiguing. The start should be made before sunrise. A guide is necessary. Provisions and water should not be forgotten. Those who intend to spend a night in a tent on the top should take a supply of fuel. Travelers must see on the previous day that the horses and their gear are fit for this unusually rough work, and that they are thoroughly well fed and rested. The view is of vast extent, embracing a great part of Syria." Thus reads the guide-book, and it sounds like real climbing.

One Arabic name for Hermon means "mountain of the white-haired," or "snow mountain," and another "the chief of mountains." It looms almost ten thousand feet above the sea and in the winter is covered with masses of snow which last even into the summer months, remaining all the year round in the deep ravines. Saint Jerome tells us that in olden times the snow was collected and used to cool the beverages of the wealthy. Perhaps it was used as a cooling drink for the harvesters, as is indicated by one of the old Hebrew proverbs:

> As the cold of snow in the time of harvest,
> So is a faithful messenger to them that send him;
> For he refresheth the soul of his masters.



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THE SUMMIT OF MT. HERMON

The steep snow fields of this mountain look admirably adapted to tobogganing, and for hunting there are bears, foxes, and wolves. When one reaches the top, one finds three peaks hemming in a massive mountain plateau, twenty miles long from northeast to southwest. Indeed, one of the names for the mountain as it lies stretched out at full length is Jebel-esh-Sheik, or "Old Man of the Mountains." This is something like our humble "Mans-field" of the Green Mountains of Vermont, with the three peaks, forehead, nose, and chin, several miles apart. Vineyards can be seen up to a height of about five thousand feet; then the dwarf green tragacanth bushes and the almond appear. Plums, cherries, and pears grow on its slopes, and juniper bushes are numerous, while higher up the stunted shrubs of the oriental steppes cover the ground.

"The dew of Hermon" referred to in the Bible[1] comes from the condensing of the moisture from the breezes off the Mediterranean Sea against the high, cold peaks of the mountain. The evaporating dew of the morning produces a heavy mist. Have you ever stayed all night on the top of a mountain and looked down in the early dawn upon the widespread view below, with the mists in the valleys enveloping the land, drifting and scudding along, making ribbons of filmy white on a background of green? The rising sun drives away this dream in the seriousness of the day's heat. Mists like these are a boon to Palestine in the hot, dry summertime. Every green thing is refreshed by the moisture. All the leaves and blossoms lift up their heads and join with the farmer in blessing Providence. These mists and dews were so refreshing that to the mind

[1] Hos. xiii, 3; vi, 4.

of Hosea, the poet-prophet of the Northern Kingdom, they were the best figure for the restored and forgiven soul.

The melting snows at the summit of Mount Hermon are the sources of the Jordan River. The mountain itself is one of "the roots of Lebanon" [1]; it is the highest peak of the eastern range which runs off into plateaus east of the Jordan. This is supposed to have been Jesus' retreat just before he left Galilee for his final journey to Jerusalem.[2]

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR THE TEACHER OR CLASS

For Mount Hermon and its names, see

SMITH. Historical Geography of the Holy Land.
KENT. Biblical Geography and History.
THOMSON. The Land and the Book.
TRISTRAM. The Natural History of the Bible.
GRANT. The Peasantry of Palestine.
BALDENSPERGER, P. J. The Immovable East. Small, Maynard & Company, New York. $2.00.
BAEDEKER. Palestine and Syria.
Bible dictionaries.

For a beautiful colored illustration, see the frontispiece in

HAZARD. A Brief Pilgrimage in the Holy Land.

[1] Hos. xiv, 5. [2] Luke ix, 28 ff.

SELECTION X. THE SMELL OF LEBANON

Hos. xiv, 4–7

The cedars of Lebanon have always been renowned; they were magnificent trees, in size somewhat like our redwoods of California, but not so tall. Isaiah speaks of them as "the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up"[1] and "the glory of Lebanon."[2] The Psalmist says that "the righteous shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon."[3] Amos compares the tall, strong Amorite to these great trees, "the Amorite, whose height was like the height of the cedars."[4] Ezekiel likened the warrior Assyrian to "a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a forest-like shade, and of high stature; and its top was among the thick boughs.[5] All the birds of the heavens made their nests in its boughs."[6] Masts were made from these tall trees — "they have taken a cedar from Lebanon to make a mast for thee."[7]

This was the majestic imagery of the Old Testament used to describe these trees, and notwithstanding the fact that there are very few of them left to-day, and those much smaller and more gnarled than the ancient ones, we know that the language is not extravagant, for at the present time, in localities where the trees attain the normal

[1] Isa. ii, 13.
[2] Isa. xxxv, 2; lx, 13.
[3] Ps. xcii, 12.
[4] Amos ii, 9.
[5] Ezek. xxxi, 3.
[6] Ezek. xxxi, 6.
[7] Ezek. xxvii, 5.

size, a board could be cut from sixty to eighty feet long and from six to eight feet wide at the bottom, tapering to two or more at the top, and beams could be had of almost any thickness desired. Some of these trees grow to be a hundred feet high.

This particular cedar (*Cedrus libani*) belongs to the conifers. It resembles the larch very closely and has dark evergreen leaves and great cones as large as a goose's egg. It spreads out its massive branches in a very characteristic way, horizontally like a roof; some of its finest specimens look like majestic oaks. The wood of the Lebanon cedar is almost indestructible. Dry rot and borers do not trouble it. It is hard, close-grained, and sound to the heart. There is abundant testimony in history as to its durability. Pliny says that the cedar roof of the temple of Diana at Ephesus lasted four hundred years, and we know that the temple of Apollo at Utica endured eleven hundred and seventy years. Of course these trees were of the greatest value for building purposes, for in addition to their size and durability the wood is of a pleasing whitish color, is easily carved, and is susceptible of a high polish. The Phœnicians cut great quantities of it, sending the lumber down into Egypt and to other neighboring countries. The three temples at Jerusalem were finished in this wood, as were also the palaces of David and Solomon. The Arabs still call these trees "the cedars of the Lord."

To-day only a few descendants of these magnificent trees remain. They are not to be found at all on Mount Hermon, and only a few of them on the western ridge of the Lebanons and farther north. But in Bible times there

were large forests covering the Lebanon region.[1] Perhaps so much reckless cutting of these and other forests had something to do with the present treeless and barren condition of much of the land.

The cedar of Lebanon has a most abundant balsamic juice exuding from every pore. Great beads of the fragrant resin stand out on every branch, and if a cut is made in the bark, it runs out very freely. If two branches meet and rub against each other, they are cemented by the juice, so that they grow fast together. It is so fragrant that "the smell of Lebanon" became a well-known phrase, and the perfume of the garments of the Ideal Maiden was likened to the fragrance of these cedar trees.[2]

This tree was the favorite of the prophets and poets of Israel. Hosea, the poet-prophet of the north, who was steeped in the secrets of nature, loved this tree. His was a hard life, full of bitter experiences for a very sensitive man, but through them all he evidently sought comfort out of doors in communion with the fields and the woods, God's messengers of health to soul and mind as well as body. In later life, when he had found the harbor of peace after his rough voyage of continual struggle with the sin of the world, he could think of no better way to express the love of God to man in forgiving and forgetting all the past than in figures drawn from the flowers and the trees.

[1] "They probably covered all the subalpine peaks of Lebanon. It is also extremely probable that the cedar flourished in those days on Hermon and Anti-Lebanon." — G. E. Post, in Hastings's Bible Dictionary. "Of the cedars there remain only seven groups. In all there are about four hundred trees." L. G. Leary, Syria, the Land of Lebanon, pp. 169, 170.

[2] Song of Songs iv, 11.

I will heal their backsliding,
I will love them freely;
For Mine anger is turned away from them.
I will be as the dew unto Israel;
He shall blossom as the lily,
And strike his roots deep as Lebanon;
His branches shall spread,
And his beauty shall be as the olive-tree,
And his smell as Lebanon.
They shall return and dwell in His shadow,
They shall live well-watered as a garden,
Till they flourish like the vine,
And be fragrant like the wine of Lebanon.[1]

Dr. George Adam Smith, the Scotch scholar, who has done more than any other living man in the study of the geography of Palestine, thus interprets the reference to the dew and the smell of Lebanon — "the smell of clear mountain air with the scent of the pines upon it. No wonder that our northern prophet painted the blessed future in the poetry of the Mountain — its air, its dew, and its trees. . . . With his home in the north, and weary of everything artificial, whether it were idols or puppet-kings, Hosea turns to the 'glory of Lebanon' as it lies, untouched by human tool or art, fresh and full of peace from God's own hand. . . . His sacraments are the open air, the mountain breeze, the dew, the vine, the lilies, the pines; and what God asks of men are life and health, fragrance and fruitfulness, beneath the shadow and the dew of His Presence."[2]

This is the modern message of the saved man, the healthy, wholesome, out-of-doors message, the virile, uplifting, social message.

[1] Hos. xiv, 4–7, G. A. Smith's translation.
[2] Smith, The Book of the Twelve Prophets.

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR THE TEACHER OR CLASS

For the Lebanons and the cedars of Lebanon, see

TRISTRAM. Natural History of the Bible.
BAEDEKER. Palestine and Syria.
Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible.
KENT. Biblical Geography and History.
THOMSON. The Land and the Book.
LEARY, L. G. Syria, the Land of Lebanon. McBride, Nast and Company, New York. $1.25.

For a thorough discussion of the question of the deforestation of the Lebanons affecting the climate and condition of the land, see

HUNTINGTON. Palestine and its Transformation, pp. 253–268.
FERNOW, BERNHARD E. History of Forestry, pp. 9, 10.

For interpretation of Hosea's message, see

SMITH, G. A. The Book of the Twelve Prophets, Vol. I, chap. xx. George H. Doran Company, New York. 2 vols., 50 cents each.

SELECTION XI. NAAMAN'S SCORN OF THE JORDAN

2 Kings v, 1–19a (4 Kings v, 1–19a, Douay)

The stories of early folklore are the natural, naïve expressions of the elemental feelings of the human race. Love and hate, joy and grief, have not been toned down to the proprieties of civilization; they burst out in terse and telling invective, rapturous adoration, or heart-breaking distress at the call of the moment, lacking all self-consciousness and therefore without affectation. Scorn is an elemental feeling and irony or sarcasm its expression. We are governed largely by our dislikes and antipathies. Culture and civilization teach us to control these, or at least to smooth them down for the comfort of those with whom we associate. In later literature all these feelings are more subtly expressed, satire takes the place of outspoken irony and sarcasm, and even love's passion is properly timed and attuned to the occasion. But a part of the charm of the early folk-story is the natural, unpremeditated expression of feelings common to the race. In the groups of Elijah and Elisha stories we have scorn delightfully expressed in the tersest kind of sarcasm. What could be more refreshing than Elijah's stinging comments on the indifference of the god Baal? "Perhaps he is musing, or is gone aside or is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked!"

NAAMAN'S SCORN OF THE JORDAN

In the Elisha story of Naaman the leper, we have another sarcastic stroke, dealt out this time against the innocent Jordan River. A man brought up in Damascus, accustomed to bathe in the pure, clear waters of the beautiful Abana, whose very name means coolness and refreshment, was told to go and dip himself in the muddy, coffee-colored Jordan, whose slimy banks are haunted by lizards and snakes. It was as if a New Englander, brought up as a boy to wade and swim and fish in the clear, sweet mountain streams that flow down from the hills of New Hampshire, should go out to the Missouri River, the "Big Muddy" of America, and be told that a bath in its murky water would cleanse him inside and out. Imagine his scorn! Such scorn was Naaman's, vigorously expressed.

But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of Jehovah his God, and wave his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned, and went away in a rage.

In reading the story be sure to get the setting. There are several striking scenes: the important Syrian general discovering that he has the dread disease of leprosy, and the home scene of distress, when the little Hebrew waiting maid, who has been carried off a captive in the last war with Israel, overhears the laments of her mistress. If any such dire calamity had come to her house in Israel, the first thing they would have done would be to go to the great good prophet, Elisha, for had he not been able to do wonders for the people? He had brought the Shunammite's boy to life[1]

[1] 2 Kings iv, 8–37.

and had sweetened the bad waters of Jericho[1] and had taken the poison out of the pottage.[2] He seemed to be all-wise and to help everyone out of his trouble. Surely he could help her master in his distress. Then the whispered counsel with each other (the mistress and the master), the willingness to catch at any straw to save life, the messenger sent to the king of Syria, the ready response with letters of introduction to the king of Israel and a great train of attendants fitted out with presents, and the royal caravan made ready for the journey;[3] the arrival of this richly caparisoned troop in the streets of Samaria; the curiosity and conjectures of every Hebrew on the street as to why such a visit should be made; the panic of the king in his palace, suspecting a deep-laid plot for a quarrel and another war; the message from Elisha to send Naaman down to him; the consternation of the neighbors as this great personage came with his cavalcade of horses and chariots and stood in front of the humble cottage of the prophet; then, finally, Naaman's consternation and wrath when Elisha, instead of paying him decent respect, simply sent his servant out and told him to go and wash in the muddy Jordan river! But afterwards, his listening to the common sense of his servants — "If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it?" — and the humbling of his pride when he wades out into the mud and makes the plunge; last of all, his gratitude to Jehovah, Elisha's God. He would still be obliged for political reasons to go through

[1] 2 Kings ii, 19–22.
[2] 2 Kings iv, 38–41.
[3] See Selection II, account of the caravans.

the forms of worship to the Syrian god Rimmon, but in his heart Jehovah would be enthroned.

Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him Jehovah had given victory unto Syria: he was also a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone out in bands, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maiden; and she waited on Naaman's wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would that my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! then would he recover him of his leprosy. And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maiden that is of the land of Israel. And the king of Syria said, Go now, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, And now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? but consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

And it was so, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariots, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of Jehovah his God, and wave his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing,

wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him; and he said, Behold now, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a present of thy servant. But he said, As Jehovah liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused. And Naaman said, If not, yet, I pray thee, let there be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth; for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto Jehovah. In this thing Jehovah pardon thy servant: when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, Jehovah pardon thy servant in this thing. And he said unto him, Go in peace.

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR THE TEACHER OR CLASS

For the Jordan River, see

SMITH. Historical Geography of the Holy Land, chap. xxii, "The Jordan Valley."

KENT. Biblical Geography and History.

Bible dictionaries.

For Naaman, leprosy, Damascus, the Abana and Pharpar, see

Bible dictionaries.

For the historical setting of this passage, see

OTTLEY, R. L. A Short History of the Hebrews, pp. 173, 174. The Macmillan Company, New York. $1.50.

For the storm-god Rimmon, see

Bible dictionaries.

SELECTION XII. THE BULLS OF BASHAN AND THE BALM OF GILEAD

Ps. xxii, 12 (xxi, 13, Douay); Deut. xxxii, 9–15; Jer. l, 17–19; Gen. xxxvii, 25; Gen. xliii, 11; Jer. viii, 18–22

East of the Jordan and up the steep banks about two thousand feet lie the high plateaus of Bashan and Gilead, and farther south those of Moab and Edom, running off to the desert of Arabia. Mount Hermon is one of the "roots" of the Lebanons or more properly of the Anti-Lebanons, as the eastern range is called. In the Book of Joshua it is called "Lebanon toward the sunrising," [1] in the Song of Songs "the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus."[2] It is the prince of peaks, sending down its melted snows and moisture to the rich, unbroken plain of Bashan. Back of the plain to the east are high volcanic mountains. One of these mountains is mentioned in the Bible as "the mount of gables" or "the mount of summits,"[3] for the tops are cone- or gable-shaped summits of extinct volcanoes. They rise between five and six thousand feet above the level of the sea. One of them to-day is called "the mount of the Druses," for a small race known as the Druses, an offshoot of the Syrians of the Lebanon region, now live there. These people, very fierce and quarrelsome with their neighbors, are dreaded on account

[1] Josh. xiii, 5.
[2] Song of Songs vii, 4.
[3] Ps. lxviii, 15, American Revised Version, marginal reading.

of their robber raids.[1] The caves of these mountains afford splendid refuge for robbers, a natural hiding place for plunderers. The high plain lying at the foot and watered by the snows of Hermon has always been famous for its cattle. When the Psalmist wanted a picture of himself in trouble he said,

> Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.[2]

When the great poet of the last chapters of Deuteronomy wanted to show the wonderful way in which the Lord had led and blessed Israel, he represented Jehovah as carrying him from the desert northward as an eagle carries her young, and putting him on the high places of the earth, where he could eat the fruit of the field and honey out of the rock, butter of the herd and milk of the flock, with fat of lambs and rams of the breed of Bashan.

> For Jehovah's portion is his people;
> Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.
> He found him in a desert land,
> And in the waste howling wilderness;
> He compassed him about, he cared for him,
> He kept him as the apple of his eye,
> As an eagle that stirreth up her nest,
> That fluttereth over her young,
> Spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them,
> Beareth them on her pinions.
> Jehovah alone did lead him,
> He made him ride on the high places of the earth,
> And he did eat of the increase of the field;
> And he made him to suck honey out of the rock,

[1] Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible, and Huntington, Palestine and its Transformation.

[2] Ps. xxii, 12.

And oil out of the flinty rock;
Butter of the herd, and milk of the flock,
With the fat of lambs,
And rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats,
With the finest of the wheat;
And of the blood of the grape thou drankest wine.

But just as those fat, sleek bulls of Bashan would kick their masters if they had a chance, so the poet represents the ingratitude of Israel towards their God.

But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked:
Thou art waxed fat, thou art grown thick, thou art become sleek;
Then he forsook God who made him,
And lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.[1]

The prophet Jeremiah also at the time of the Babylonian captivity can think of no more comforting hope to hold out to his people than that they shall return like half-starved and hunted sheep to feed in the rich pasture lands of Bashan.

Israel is a hunted sheep; the lions have driven him away: first, the king of Assyria devoured him; and now at last Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones. Therefore thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria. And I will bring Israel again to his pasture, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon the hills of Ephraim and in Gilead.[2]

Even to-day the size of the oxen in this part of Palestine reminds the traveler of the famous "kine of Bashan" of Biblical times. But the land that formerly was used only

[1] Deut. xxxii, 9–15, American Revised Version, with marginal readings. "This splendid 'Song of Moses' is a richly colored poetical survey of Israel's history in the spirit of the greater prophets." — Gordon, Poets of the Old Testament.

[2] Jer. l, 17–19.

for grazing is much of it now under the plow with rich returns in fields of wheat. This change is accounted for by the fact that the soil, being made of the deposits of lava from the volcanic mountains near by, had not in those olden times lain long enough to disintegrate and lend itself to cultivation.

Just south of this plateau of Bashan lie the hills of Gilead. The Yarmuk River, flowing precipitously down the bluff to the Jordan, separates the two sections of this eastern range. This territory is densely wooded in places; the tops of the hills are covered with pine trees. Beneath them is a zone of evergreen oaks, and lower down there is the deciduous oak mixed with wild olive and semitropical trees, while near the Jordan valley is found the palm. Here, too, are the arbutus and the myrtle, and by the streams is the pink oleander, a shrub of gorgeous beauty, fringing the banks of the upper Jordan and the Yarmuk, Jabbok, and Arnon rivers east of the Jordan. The location of the streams can readily be seen by the ribbon of burning red blossoms against the deep green foliage. It is perhaps the tree to which the righteous man is compared:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor standeth in the way of sinners,
Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers:
But his delight is in the law of the Lord;
And on his law doth he meditate day and night.
And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water,
That bringeth forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also doth not wither;
And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.[1]

[1] Ps. i, 1–3, American Revised Version (with exception of *the Lord* for *Jehovah*).

Sometimes in Gilead the oleander grows as high as a forest tree, under the shade of which the traveler may camp or rest. Its branches are used for the out-of-door booths in which the people camp while harvesting the grapes. Amidst the oak groves are open glades and dells, where sheep graze and grain is harvested and olive orchards are planted. No wonder some of the Israelites begged to be allowed to remain here in this land so attractive to the farmer and the shepherd, rather than cross over and settle among the rugged Judean hills. To one acquainted with the country the very name *Gilead* suggests a quiet retreat, a land of balm and health for body and mind. These high hills shut away from the rest of the country were the refuge David sought when he fled from his son Absalom, who was trying to dethrone him, and in one of these oaks Absalom caught his hair and ignominiously met his death. It was from Gilead that Elijah came, and here he found his retreat when the famine drove him to the brook where he was fed by the ravens.

This is the land that gave us the phrase "the balm of Gilead." It was from Gilead that the Ishmaelites, to whom Joseph was sold, came "with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh."[1] This balm with its wonderful medicinal properties was one of the "choice fruits of the land" which Jacob sent down to Egypt as a present to his unknown son Joseph, then a great official at Pharaoh's court.[2] Ezekiel describes the Israelites as trading in "wheat and pannag [a kind of spice, probably] and honey and oil and balm."[3] Jeremiah twice uses the word *balm* as the figurative expression for the great restorative in the time of a nation's desperate sickness.

[1] Gen. xxxvii, 25. [2] Gen. xliii, 11. [3] Ezek. xxvii, 17.

Go up into Gilead, and take balm, O virgin daughter of Egypt: in vain dost thou use many medicines; there is no healing for thee.[1]

Oh that I could comfort myself against sorrow! my heart is faint within me. Behold, the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people from a land that is very far off: Is not Jehovah in Zion? is not her King in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with foreign vanities? The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt: I mourn; dismay hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?[2]

There is a false balm of Gilead sold now to the traveler; the tree from which it is made grows on the sultry plains along the shores of the Dead Sea. The oil from the berry is prepared by the Arabs about Jericho and called the balm of Gilead. But it is not the genuine article referred to in the Bible. That tree was the balm of Gilead of the botanists (*Balsamodendron gileadense*) and is to-day found in the neighborhood of the city of Mecca. Its original home was on the east coast of Africa, but in the days of the Hebrews we find it as a cultivated plant in the plains of Jericho, where it was grown as late as the time of the Jewish writer Josephus, who lived until after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. There is a tradition that the Queen of Sheba presented some of it to King Solomon, who had it planted there. Cleopatra sent to Jericho for some of the plants for her garden at Heliopolis. Twice this balm tree was paraded in the triumphal processions at Rome: once in 65 B.C. when Pompey came home from his trip to the East and his conquest of Judea, and a second time after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in

[1] Jer. xlvi, 11. [2] Jer. viii, 18–22.

70 A.D., when the balm tree was taken together with the golden candlestick and all the treasures of the Temple. It is not a very imposing tree, only a small evergreen without much foliage and with small white blossoms. Its value is in the balsam, which may be drained out through a cut in the bark or obtained from the green nuts. When the nuts are ripe they are reddish black with a pulpy case containing a fragrant yellow seed. An inferior quality of balsam is also obtained from the young wood by bruising and boiling it. This precious balsam was used internally as a medicine and externally for wounds. Tacitus, Strabo, and Pliny all speak of the balm of Gilead as very valuable and coming from Palestine.

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR THE TEACHER OR CLASS

For Bashan and Gilead, see

SMITH. Historical Geography of the Holy Land, chap. xxvii, "Israel in Gilead and Bashan."
KENT. Biblical Geography and History.
HUNTINGTON. Palestine and its Transformation.

For the Druses, see

HUNTINGTON. Palestine and its Transformation.
Encyclopædias.

For the oleander and the balm of Gilead, see

TRISTRAM. Natural History of the Bible.
Bible dictionaries.

For location of the brook Cherith, see

Bible dictionaries.

SELECTION XIII. THE CAVES

Gen. xix, 30; Obad. 3, 4, 10–15 (Abdias 3, 4, 10–15, Douay); 1 Sam. xxiv (1 Kings xxiv, Douay); 1 Sam. xiii, 5–7, 19 to xiv, 23 (1 Kings xiii, 5–7, 19 to xiv, 23, Douay); 1 Sam. xxii, 1, 2 (1 Kings xxii, 1, 2, Douay); 1 Sam. xxviii, 3–25 (1 Kings xxviii, 3–25, Douay); Amos ix, 1 b–3 a

The caves of Palestine have figured extensively in the life and literature of its people. The limestone and soft chalk deposits of the hills lend themselves readily to the formation of natural caves varying in size from a very small hole to a palatial suite of rooms. Some of them are easy of access, near the surface of the ground; others are hard to get at, under the mountains. They have been used for all kinds of purposes — dwellings, hiding places, sheep pens, graves, cisterns, and even a laundry. They are found all the way around from Edrei, the capital of Bashan and the home of the giant king Og,[1] with his wonderful bedstead, through Gilead, Moab, and Edom east of the Dead Sea, around Jerusalem and Hebron, where Abraham buried his wife in the cave of Machpelah, to the caves of the Shephelah or "Samson country," where David sought refuge from Saul. In very ancient times there were people who made the caves their homes, and even to-day in very primitive and uncivilized places they are thus used. These people are called cave dwellers, or troglodytes. We know that long before Abraham came to

[1] Deut. iii, 11.

Palestine there were such cave dwellers in that land. The country is full of wild gorges honeycombed with caves. Here and there one finds signs that they were used long ago by troglodytes and hermits. Now goats are often kept in them, and they afford a refuge if one is caught in the rain. True troglodytes are found even to-day in the hills of Gilead. There are cave villages in Bashan, used now as a refuge from Arab robbers, but once probably inhabited all the time. Thirty miles northeast of Edrei there is an inscription on the rock, written by King Agrippa I, exhorting the people to give up the practice of living like wild beasts in caves. Indeed, the caves on the eastern side of the Jordan are most famous as hiding places. A traveler thus describes exploring one of them: "When all was ready we were one by one let twirling down by a rope into a cistern where straw was stored. At the bottom the only opening was a hole two feet in diameter, through which we squeezed head first and found ourselves in a passage of about the same height. Lighting our candles we went forward, sometimes on hands and knees and sometimes on our stomachs, like worms trailing over the damp mud of the cavern floor. We continually expected to reach a larger passageway, but never did, although occasionally the tunnel widened into a cave where one could stand and walk around. Three times we came to chambers large enough to furnish shelter to a score of people; again we traversed passages whose branches ended sometimes in blank walls of masonry or in shafts leading up to the courtyards of houses in the village or in dry cisterns which once furnished water to the people of the caves. We crawled for an hour and a half and came out

plastered with mud from head to foot. No one knows just when the caves were made, but their use is evident. They were places of refuge from the Arabs. Each house seems to have had a well communicating with the underground chambers. At times of alarm the people and their chief valuables could promptly be hidden in the caves."[1]

Upon the plateau of Moab, near Mount Pisgah, the scene of Moses' death, has been found a carefully excavated cave about twenty feet long and fifteen wide, hewed out of the limestone, with a spring below. This room has two windows looking down the valley toward the city of Zoar, the place where Lot escaped from the destruction of Sodom. But you remember that Lot, having seen his wife caught on the way by the storm of brimstone which turned her into a pillar of salt, was still afraid even after he had reached his retreat; consequently, as the Bible tells us,

> Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.[2]

There has been much discussion as to just where Sodom was, but this locality, so subject to volcanic storms of bituminous smoke and with the cave so near to the traditional site of Zoar, seems to fit in well with the Bible story. In a mountain cave there would be safety even though it hailed fire and brimstone all around. The door of this cave has a trough cut in the rock to lead off the water in times of heavy rain. This door is up so high that it can be reached only by climbing up the sheer rock with the

[1] Huntington, Transformation of Palestine, pp. 239 f.
[2] Gen. xix, 30.

help of steps cut into its face six or eight inches, or by scrambling down from above by means of other steps hewed out for the purpose.

Down in Edom has been found a very wonderful temple cut out of the living rock. The name of the capital city itself is *Petra*, which means "rock." These Edomites were cousins of the Hebrews, being the descendants of Esau. There was never any love lost between the brothers Jacob and Esau. You remember when they parted after their final visit together at the time Jacob was returning home from the east with his family and flocks, he sent up the prayer to Jehovah, "May the Lord watch between me and thee while we are absent one from another," so distrustful was he of what Esau might do. And throughout the history of the Edomites they were distrusted and hated by the Israelites. They made frequent robber raids upon the flocks and cattle of their neighbors, even standing over the poor inhabitants of Jerusalem when it was burned by the Babylonians, looting their houses and carrying off the plunder. Edom was a good home for this robber race, for the caves made a splendid hiding place, and many a caravan passing up the eastern road from Egypt and the Red Sea lost its precious merchandise in the night by the way. The prophet Obadiah evidently was among the captives of Jerusalem when they were chained and dragged off to exile. He saw these heartless Edomites jeering at them across the street and stealing all they could lay their hands upon. Not able to contain himself for indignation, he flung out against the whole tribe the bitter invective which is the one short chapter known as the Book of Obadiah.

The pride of thy heart hath deceived thee, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou mount on high as the eagle, and though thy nest be set among the stars, I will bring thee down from thence, saith Jehovah.

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For the violence done to thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that strangers carried away his substance, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. But look not thou on the day of thy brother in the day of his disaster, and rejoice not over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither speak proudly in the day of distress. Enter not into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, look not thou on their affliction in the day of their calamity, neither lay ye hands on their substance in the day of their calamity. And stand thou not in the crossway, to cut off those of his that escape; and deliver not up those of his that remain in the day of distress.

For the day of Jehovah is near upon all the nations: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy dealing shall return upon thine own head.[1]

Just west of the Dead Sea, near the terrible wilderness, is Engedi, the scene of David's magnanimity towards Saul. These David-Saul stories have received the highest praise as great literature. They are called immortal among the stories of the world.

And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi. Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats. And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet. Now David and his

[1] Obad. 3, 4, 10–15.

men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave. And the men of David said unto him, Behold, the day of which Jehovah said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thy hand, and thou shalt do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily. And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. And he said unto his men, Jehovah forbid that I should do this thing unto my lord, Jehovah's anointed, to put forth my hand against him, seeing he is Jehovah's anointed. So David checked his men with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. And Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way.

David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth, and did obeisance. And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearkenest thou to men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that Jehovah had delivered thee to-day into my hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee; but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth my hand against my lord; for he is Jehovah's anointed. Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand; for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in my hand, and I have not sinned against thee, though thou huntest after my life to take it. Jehovah judge between me and thee, and Jehovah avenge me of thee; but my hand shall not be upon thee. As saith the proverb of the ancients, Out of the wicked cometh forth wickedness; but my hand shall not be upon thee. After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea. Jehovah therefore be judge, and give sentence between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thy hand.

And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept. And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rendered

unto me good, whereas I have rendered unto thee evil. And thou hast declared this day how that thou hast dealt well with me, forasmuch as when Jehovah had delivered me up into thy hand, thou killedst me not. For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore Jehovah reward thee good for that which thou hast done unto me this day. And now, behold, I know that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thy hand. Swear now therefore unto me by Jehovah, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house. And David sware unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the stronghold.[1]

If one is walking along a path in a valley northeast of Jerusalem a few hours distant from the city, at a certain spot he may look up thirty feet above him and spy a hole in a narrow overhanging ledge of rock. If he is an athlete and can climb up through this hole, he will find behind the natural platform a suite of four rooms, connecting with each other, cut into the side hill. All up and down this valley there are many natural caves. Some of them have been excavated further by the hand of man, perhaps by some hermit for his solitary dwelling. In the valley of Michmash, about twelve miles north of Jerusalem, where Saul and Jonathan fought the Philistines, there are found to-day a good many caves which seem to tally exactly with the Bible account. One can get at them only by a rope let down from the precipice above. This is the way Herod let down his soldiers in baskets on the banks of the Sea of Galilee, when the people who were revolting against the government sought refuge in the caves there. The Old Testament tells us a famous story of the valley of

[1] 1 Sam. xxiv.

Michmash, with its holes for hiding, which the Hebrews took advantage of in the days of the Philistine raids.

The Philistines assembled themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea-shore in multitude: and they came up, and encamped in Michmash, eastward of Beth-aven. When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait (for the people were distressed), then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in coverts, and in pits. Now some of the Hebrews had gone over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead; but as for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

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Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel; for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears: but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock, when the edges of the mattocks, and of the coulters, and of the forks, and of the axes were blunt, and to set the goads. So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found. And the garrison of the Philistines went out unto the pass of Michmash.

Now it fell upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on yonder side. But he told not his father. And Saul abode in the uttermost part of Gibeah under the pomegranate-tree which is in Migron: and the people that were with him were about six hundred men; and Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest of Jehovah in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone. And between the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, there was a rocky crag on the one side, and a rocky crag on the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. The one crag rose up on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba.

And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that Jehovah will work for us; for there is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few. And his armorbearer said unto him, Do all that is in thy heart: turn thee, behold, I am with thee according to thy heart. Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto the men, and we will disclose ourselves unto them. If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them. But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up; for Jehovah hath delivered them into our hand: and this shall be the sign unto us. And both of them disclosed themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves. And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will show you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armorbearer, Come up after me; for Jehovah hath delivered them into the hand of Israel. And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armorbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armorbearer slew them after him. And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armorbearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were half a furrow's length in an acre of land. And there was a trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people; the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled; and the earth quaked: so there was an exceeding great trembling.

And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went hither and thither. Then said Saul unto the people that were with him, Number now, and see who is gone from us. And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armorbearer were not there. And Saul said unto Ahijah, Bring hither the ark of God. For the ark of God was there at that time with the children of Israel. And it came to pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, that the tumult that was in the camp of the Philistines went on and increased: and Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thy hand. And Saul and all the people that were with him were gathered together, and came to the battle: and behold,

every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was a very great discomfiture. Now the Hebrews that were with the Philistines as beforetime, and that went up with them into the camp, from the country round about, even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan. Likewise all the men of Israel that had hid themselves in the hill-country of Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle. So Jehovah saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over by Beth-aven.[1]

Far to the north of Michmash, near Mount Tabor and the Sea of Galilee, is a cave noted as the resort of the Witch of Endor, whom Saul consulted one day in his desperation after the death of his good counselor Samuel. These dark caverns of the earth would seem the very place for the haunt of a witch. There she might brew her potions and bring back the voice of the dead to tell the fortune of a despairing king.[2]

Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land. And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and encamped in Shunem; and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they encamped in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. And when Saul inquired of Jehovah, Jehovah answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.

And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and went, he and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night:

[1] 1 Sam. xiii, 5–7, 19 to xiv, 23, American Revised Version, with marginal readings.

[2] 1 Sam. xxviii, 3–25.

and he said, Divine unto me, I pray thee, by the familiar spirit, and bring me up whomsoever I shall name unto thee. And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? And Saul sware to her by Jehovah, saying, As Jehovah liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice; and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what seest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I see a god coming up out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a robe. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground, and did obeisance.

And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. And Samuel said, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing Jehovah is departed from thee, and is become thine adversary? And Jehovah hath done unto thee, as he spake by me: and Jehovah hath rent the kingdom out of thy hand, and given it to thy neighbor, even to David. Because thou obeyedst not the voice of Jehovah, and didst not execute his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath Jehovah done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover Jehovah will deliver Israel also with thee into the hand of the Philistines; and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: Jehovah will deliver the host of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines.

Then Saul fell straightway his full length upon the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night. And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thy handmaid hath hearkened unto thy voice, and

I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me. Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thy handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way. But he refused, and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, constrained him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed. And the woman had a fatted calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it; and she took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof: and she brought it before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

Some of these caves in Palestine are low and narrow, with tortuous passages, in many cases requiring one to crawl on hands and knees, while others contain high, vaulted, cathedral-like chambers. In some places stairs have been cut down into the hollows below the ground, and these hollows have been enlarged and cemented. Sometimes they are used as cisterns for catching water. In one cave a rock-cut channel connects it with a spring, and here are found conveniences for an ancient laundry. The walls of this cave are adorned with beautiful maidenhair ferns.

Over in the region of the Shephelah, or hill country, between Jerusalem and the Philistine Plain there are many caves. Professor Huntington thus describes one which he explored: "Because the hills are composed of easily worked chalk, they have been carved into a thousand caves. On one of these, or rather in a series of recesses opening into a large central cavern, we made our camp. In the starlight that evening we walked from cave to cave through dewy grass and grain, and lighting our candles entered the rock-hewn refuges of the early saints and the

tombs of still earlier Phœnicians. In one place a dark hole in the hillside was lined with maidenhair fern so thick as to hide the walls and the slippery chalk steps down which we almost slid. At a depth of about fifteen feet below the surface three doors opened before us in the gloom, one to the left, one to the right, and one in front. The left-hand door opened high on the side of a circular chamber twenty feet or more in diameter and of almost equal height. A flight of stone steps led spirally downward, but we did not descend far, for at the bottom the candlelight was reflected in dark water. The right-hand door likewise opened upon a flight of rock-hewn steps. They descended into a circular domed room of great height having a diameter of nearly forty feet. High on the right some small chambers with niches designed for the reception of bodies opened from the main room, while on the left a great doorway led into the still larger room to which the third door at the foot of the outside stairs also gave access. In the middle of this last room a square well some three feet across proves that the caves were long inhabited. The edges of the rock at the mouth of the well have been beautifully fluted where the rope has rubbed against the chalk as countless leather buckets were drawn up full of cold water. The fluting is much like that on some of the columns in Indian temples where small grooves are cut in the sides of larger ones in pleasing variety."

The cave of Adullam (the place of refuge David first sought when Saul turned against him) was among these chalk hills. Here his band of discontents was formed.

David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave of Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they

went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.[1]

Another famous scene in David's life connected with this cave[2] is celebrated by Charles Lamb in his poem "The Cave of Adullam."

> David and his three captains bold
> Kept ambush once within a hold.
> It was in Adullam's cave,
> Nigh which no water they could have.

These same caves later harbored Judas Maccabeus and his faithful followers in their desperate struggle against the Greeks in 166 B.C. About a century before this the Phœnicians had decorated some of them. They were evidently used as burial places for the dead. They generally consist of three rooms about seven or eight feet high, one in front and one on either side. The walls of these rooms are lined with niches about three feet by a foot and a half, which are the doors of the graves. They set back into the hillside six or seven feet. In the main room of one of these caves may still be seen over the niches a much disfigured series of paintings representing men and animals in hunting scenes. The relationship to Egypt is shown by the pictures of African animals, such as the giraffe, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, and crocodile. This particular cave was made into its present form about two hundred and fifty years before Christ. It was the burial place of the Phœnician chief whose tomb is a large niche at the end of the main room.

[1] 1 Sam. xxii, 1, 2. [2] 2 Sam. xxiii, 13–17.

There are caves in the rocks of Mount Carmel also. Amos, the great prophet of Justice, used the figure of the caves of Carmel when he warned the people of his day that unless they rooted out the social wrongs rampant under a false cloak of religion, the Lord would root them out.

There shall not one of them flee away, and there shall not one of them escape. Though they dig into Sheol, thence shall my hand take them; and though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down. And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence.[1]

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR THE TEACHER OR CLASS

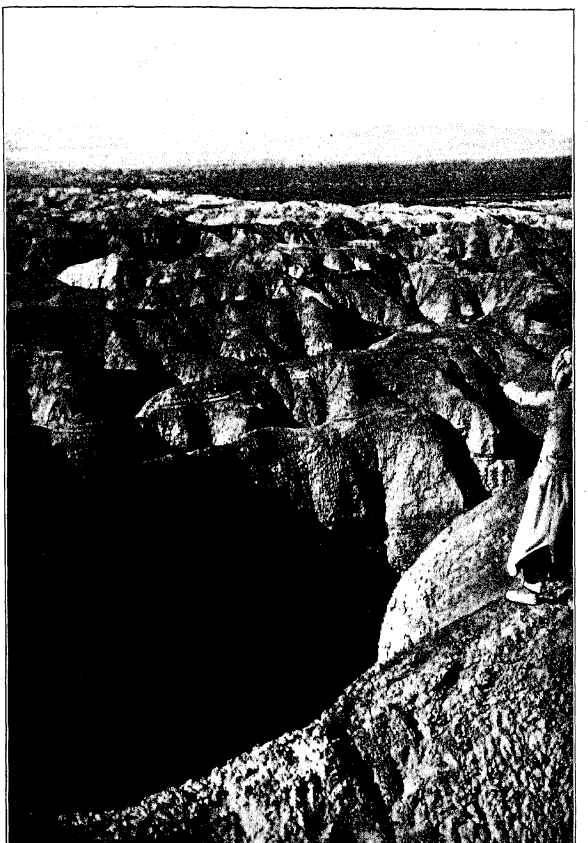
For the caves, see

HUNTINGTON. Palestine and its Transformation.
GRANT. The Peasantry of Palestine.
Bible dictionaries.

For the David-Saul stories, see

FOWLER. History of the Literature of Ancient Israel.
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BALDWIN. How to Write.

[1] Amos ix, 1b–3a.



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THE WILDERNESS SOUTH OF THE DEAD SEA

SELECTION XIV. THE DESERT

Ps. ciii, 15, 16 (cii, 15, 16, Douay); Ps. lxiii, 1 (lxii, 2, 3, Douay); Ps. xlii, 1, 2 (xli, 2, 3, Douay); Ps. cvii, 4 ff. (cvi, 4 ff., Douay); Ps. cxliii, 6–8 (cxlii, 6–8, Douay); Isa. xxxii, 1, 2; Isa. lv; Isa. xl

Palestine is a land of contrasts, and the force of Hebrew literature is largely in its contrasts. In the Congressional Library at Washington are to be seen two pictures, one at either end of the same corridor. The one is painted in bright red, the other in brilliant blue. Why were they so placed? To bring out the force of each more vividly by the striking contrast. Thus we find it in Hebrew literature, the dark against the light; doom and blessing; joy and sorrow; despair and hope; fear and faith, and the contrast pictured with the swiftest strokes of the pen. Only here it was evidently not premeditated art, but the naïve, unconscious expression of native genius. We must remember, however, that the seeds of genius are sown in the land, are nourished by the soil, are watered by the skies of a country. The spirit of racial genius is felt in the very atmosphere. The breath of its life is drawn into the soul as the men of a race breathe the air of their native heath. So it was in Hebrew literature. Amos, the stern prophet of Justice, could give such dark, blasting forebodings of ruin because he himself lived neighbor to the wilderness, "next door to doom"; Hosea, the prophet of forgiving Love, could picture the joy and refreshed, invigorated life of the forgiven soul because he himself had

known the recreating power of the dews of Hermon and the smell of Lebanon; the Psalmist could appreciate the Peace of God because he had been in the terror of the storm; Joel could see the punishment of his people like a scourge of locusts; Isaiah imagined that Paradise would be somewhat like Mount Carmel in all its beauty; Ezekiel pictured the New Jerusalem as a city with a perpetual fountain of living water flowing down in a great stream to the sea, where fish could thrive and trees could flourish, because he was so familiar with the scarcity of water on the Judean hills and the barrenness of the shores of the Dead Sea.

Thus the wilderness and the desert afford many figures for the poet. "The wilderness shall blossom as the rose"[1] because the utterly forlorn and unattractive landscape bordering on the Salt Sea bursts out in bloom under the influence of the spring rains and for a short time is sprinkled with beautiful flowers; man's days are compared to the life of the grass and the flowers of the field because the hot east wind blowing from the desert passes over it and withers it up in a day.

> As for man, his days are as grass;
> As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.
> For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone;
> And the place thereof shall know it no more.[2]

The intense thirst of the traveler on the desert road is like the thirst of the soul for God.

> O God, thou art my God; earnestly will I seek thee:
> My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee,
> In a dry and weary land, where no water is.[3]

[1] Isa. xxxv, 1. [2] Ps. ciii, 15, 16. [3] Ps. lxiii, 1.

As the heart panteth after the water brooks,
So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:
When shall I come and appear before God?[1]

Straying in the wilderness, in the desert,
The way to an inhabited city they found not.
Hungry, yea thirsty,
Their soul fainted within them.

Then they cried unto Jehovah in their strait,
That out of their distresses he might deliver them;
Then he made them tread in a straight way,
To go unto an inhabited city.[2]

And the picture which Isaiah drew of the Ideal Man to come, who was to embody the Spirit of Justice, was of one who should give rest and confidence to the people as the shade of a great rock in a weary land.

Behold, righteously the King shall reign,
And the princes justly shall they rule;
And a great man shall be as a hiding place from the wind,
Like a covert from the rainstorm,
Like rivulets in a parched land,
Like the shadow of a huge cliff in a thirsty land.[3]

The memory of the weary, thirsty days which the captives spent toiling over the road to Babylon, and later back again to Jerusalem, was stamped so indelibly upon their minds that the poets of the exile most naturally represented repentant Israel as spreading out her hands to God for relief from intolerable thirst of soul.

[1] Ps. xlii, 1, 2.
[2] Ps. cvii, 4ff., Briggs's translation.
[3] Isa. xxxii, 1, 2, see Cheyne's and Kent's translations.

I spread forth my hands unto thee:
My soul thirsteth after thee, as a weary land.
Make haste to answer me, O Jehovah; my spirit faileth:
Hide not thy face from me,
Lest I become like them that go down into the pit.
Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning;
For in thee do I trust:
Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk;
For I lift up my soul unto thee.[1]

But nowhere has the hope of salvation from distress been more vividly and beautifully expressed than by the great Prophet of the Exile in the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, where he pictures the satisfying of thirsty Israel, not by the wine and milk of Babylon, which could be easily bought with money, but by the satisfying of his thirsty, homesick soul, that needed to be revived. The first stanza imitates the call of the water-sellers and the last two show the miraculous transformation of the desert into a land luxuriant with Israel's favorite trees, the fir and the myrtle.

Ho, everyone who thirsteth, come ye to the waters,
And he that hath no money, come!
Buy and eat, without money,
Wine and milk without price.

Why spend money for what is not bread
And your earnings for that which cannot satisfy?
Hearken! Hearken unto me!
And eat ye that which is good,
And let your soul delight itself in fatness.

Incline your ear and come unto me;
Hear, and your soul shall revive;
And I will make with you an everlasting covenant,
The sure promises of kindness toward David.

[1] Ps. cxliii, 6–8.

Just as I made him as a witness to the peoples,
A prince and a commander to the nations,
So thou wilt call a nation which thou knowest not,
And they who know thee not shall run to thee,
Because of Jehovah thy God,
And Israel's Holy One, for he hath honored thee.

Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found;
Call ye upon him while he is near;
He will have compassion,
And will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
And your ways are not my ways, is Jehovah's oracle,
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are my ways higher than your ways,
And my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain cometh down from heaven,
And returneth not thither,
Except it hath watered the earth
And made it bring forth and sprout,
And given seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

So shall my word be that goeth forth from my mouth;
It shall not return unto me empty,
Except it hath accomplished what I please,
And it hath prospered in the thing for which I sent it.

For with joy shall ye go out,
And in peace shall ye be led forth;
The mountains and the hills shall burst out before you into singing,
And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Instead of the thorn-bush shall come up the fir tree,
Instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree;

And it shall be a memorial to Jehovah,
An everlasting sign which shall not be cut off.[1]

The long journey of seven hundred miles to Babylon on foot and in fetters has been likened to the transportation of Russian exiles to Siberia. But the prophet's picture of the road back home to Jerusalem after the years of captivity is of the desert way transformed and prepared by the tender care of the Great Shepherd who is bringing home his lost sheep. The usual way to Babylon was around the desert, not through it, but the prophet is impatient of roundabout roads and so sketches in a sublime song of faith and cheer the shortest way, made ready by a wonderful transformation. This whole fortieth chapter of Isaiah is a marvelous lyric poem with the qualities and power of the drama; "like the prelude of an opera, it almost sings itself, voice answering voice."

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and declare to her
That her hard service is accomplished, her guilt is paid off,
That she hath received from Jehovah's hand double for all her sins.

Hark! one that calleth!
In the wilderness clear ye Jehovah's way.
Make level in the desert a highway for our God!
Let every mountain and hill be made low,
And every valley be lifted up,
And the crooked be made straight,
And the rough ridges a plain,
And the glory of Jehovah will be revealed.
And all flesh shall see it together,
For the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.

[1] See Cheyne's, Kent's, and McFadyen's translations and arrangements.

Hark! one that calleth!
And one said, "What shall I call?"
All flesh is grass,
And all the grace thereof like flowers of the field.

Dry is the grass, faded are the flowers,
If the breath of Jehovah hath blown thereon.
Dry is the grass, faded are the flowers,
But the word of our God shall stand forever.

To a high mountain get thee up,
Zion's herald of good news;
Lift up mightily thy voice,
Jerusalem's herald of good news,
Lift up fearlessly.
Say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!"

Behold, Jehovah cometh in might,
And his Arm is maintaining his rule;
Behold, his reward is with him,
And his recompense is before him.
He shall feed his flock like a shepherd,
He shall gather the lambs in his arm,
And carry them in his bosom,
And shall gently lead those that have their young.

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand,
And ruled off the heavens with a span,
Or enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure,
And weighed the mountains in scales,
And the hills in a balance?

Who hath directed the spirit of Jehovah,
And as his counselor advised him?
With whom hath he consulted for enlightenment,
To be instructed in the right,
To be shown the way of understanding?

Lo the nations! as a drop from a bucket,
And as dust on a balance are they reckoned;
Lo the isles! as a straw he uplifteth,
And Lebanon is not enough for fuel,
And its wild beasts for a burnt offering.
All the nations are as nothing before him,
They are reckoned by him as chaos and nothingness.

To whom then will ye liken God,
And what likeness place beside him?
An image! a craftsman cast it,
And a smelter overlays it with gold,
And forgeth for it chains of silver.
He who is too poor to do this
Chooses a tree that is not decayed,
Seeks for himself a skilled craftsman,
To set up an image that shall not totter.

Do ye not know? Do ye not hear?
Hath it not been told you from the beginning?
Have ye not understood from the founding of the earth?
It is he who is enthroned above the vault of the earth,
And its inhabitants are as locusts;
Who stretcheth out the heavens as a thin veil,
And spreadeth them out like a habitable tent.

It is he who bringeth men of weight to nothing,
The rulers of the earth he maketh as waste.
Scarcely have they been planted, scarcely have they been sown,
Scarcely hath the stock taken root in the earth,
But he bloweth upon them and they wither,
And a whirlwind carries them away like stubble.

To whom then will ye liken me,
That I should equal him? saith the Holy One.
Lift up your eyes on high and see;
Who hath created these?[1]

[1] The stars.

He who bringeth forth their host by number,
And calleth each by his name;
Through abounding might and firmness of strength,
Not one is missing.

Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel;
My way is hid from Jehovah
And my right is unnoticed by my God?
Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard?
An everlasting God is Jehovah.

The creator of the ends of the earth,
He fainteth not, neither is weary,
His wisdom is unfathomable.
He giveth vigor to the fainting,
And upon the powerless he lavisheth strength.
Young men may faint and grow weary,
And the strongest youths may stumble,
But they who trust in Jehovah renew their vigor,
They shall mount on wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint.[1]

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR THE TEACHER OR CLASS

For the desert, see

GOODRICH-FREER. Things seen in Palestine, chap. iii, "The Desert Life."
BALDENSPERGER. P. J. The Immovable East, chap. ii, "In the Bedouin Country."
KENT. Biblical Geography and History.
GRANT. The Peasantry of Palestine.
HUNTINGTON. Palestine and its Transformation, chap. v, "The Wilderness of Judea."

[1] See Kent's, Cheyne's, and McFadyen's translations and arrangements.

SMITH, G. A. Isaiah, Vol. II, chap. iv, "Israel in Exile." 2 vols. George H. Doran Company, New York. 50 cents a volume.
Bible dictionaries.

For the passages in Isaiah and the Psalms, see

International Critical Commentary, "Isaiah" and "Psalms."
Students' Old Testament: "Sermons, Epistles and Apocalypses of Israel's Prophets."
MCFADYEN, J. E. The Bible for Home and School: "The Book of the Prophecies of Isaiah." The Macmillan Company, New York. 90 cents.
SMITH. Isaiah.
FOWLER. History of the Literature of Ancient Israel.

SELECTION XV. THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

Ps. civ (Ps. ciii, Douay); Deut. viii, 7–10; Exod. xxxiv, 22, 26; Judges vi, 11, 12; and selections from the Prophets and from Job.

We started this series of studies with the Coast Road, and we have now reached the road called the Desert Way. Between the coast on the west and the desert on the east are hills and vales sheltering the homes of the people. Sometimes these homes were in the larger cities, like Jerusalem and Samaria, but for the most part they were in little villages like Bethlehem, the birthplace of David, six miles south of Jerusalem, or Anathoth, the home of Jeremiah, six miles to the north. The great men of the Hebrew race sometimes came from the city, — Isaiah, her greatest statesman, was a city man, so was Zephaniah, — but more often they came from the country. Micah was the prophet of the poor country peasant, with his home in Moresheth looking down from his highland farm over the coast road. Amos came from Tekoa, near the wilderness, and was proud to be called a shepherd and a dresser of sycamore trees. Elijah's home was in the remote districts of Gilead, and he found his successor, Elisha, in Northern Israel, plowing with twelve yoke of oxen. Deborah was a country woman, who sat under her palm tree in Ephraim to judge Israel, and King Lemuel's model wife was one

> Who considereth a field and buyeth it;
> With the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.[1]

[1] Prov. xxxi, 16.

The Hebrew race was essentially a rural race. Their genius was of the rugged, virile sort produced on the farm, tilling the soil, planting the vine, following the sheep. Their knowledge of God came largely through nature, and they read nature as an open book because they lived out of doors. The Hebrew poets were as unerring in their appreciation of nature as the Greek artists in their instinct for form and proportion.[1] Who but one most familiar with the country could have written such a nature poem as the one hundred fourth Psalm? There the Psalmist calls the light God's garment and the heavens his curtain, the winds his messengers and the flames his ministers, and praises him as the great Creator of the sea and the mountain, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air,

> Who causeth the grass to grow for the cattle,
> And herb for the service of man;
> That he may bring forth food out of the earth,
> And wine that maketh glad the heart of man.

And with this as a background he sings of man,

> Who goeth forth unto his work
> And to his labor until the evening.

The characteristic labor of this rural nation, the work that caused them to bless the Lord with such spontaneous, heartfelt fervor, was the labor of the agriculturist, tending the sheep, dressing the vine, raising the grain. In Hebrew literature we have many songs which sprang out of the hearts of these nature-lovers as they worked. Perhaps it was the freedom of this out-of-door life that made them

[1] Fowler, History of the Literature of Ancient Israel, p. 268.

poets. At any rate, it was their rural independence that made them hard to conquer.

Farming has been one of the chief occupations of the people of Palestine from the earliest days when the great King of Egypt, Thutmose III, sent his men up every year to the valley of Esdraelon to cut the grain for his army. Two or three hundred years after Thutmose III, at the time when the Children of Israel escaped from their slavery in Egypt, they turned their faces to the Land of Promise because they expected in that land to own fields of wheat and barley and hillsides covered with vines and fig trees and to have enough to eat from their own little plots of ground. To a people who had been working in a brick factory, serving heartless taskmasters for a pittance which was scarcely enough to support life, this Promised Land always seemed like a paradise.

For Jehovah thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of olive-trees and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig copper. And thou shalt eat and be full, and thou shalt bless Jehovah thy God for the good land which he hath given thee.[1]

In gratitude for such a land of country homes, where they should be neither slaves nor renters, but where each man could sit under his vine and fig tree,[2] the Israelites established in the early days an annual feast much like our Thanksgiving Day or the Harvest Home festival of Canada.

[1] Deut. viii, 7–10. [2] Mic. iv, 4.

And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, even of the first-fruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end. The first of the first-fruits of thy ground thou shalt bring unto the house of Jehovah thy God.[1]

Of course the Israelites had their troubles in getting hold of this good wheat land. We have seen what exasperating days the Danites spent hovering over the fields of the Philistines, and how Samson stole his revenge by setting fire to the standing grain.[2] Gideon, too, on the eastern side of the country, was obliged to hide the wheat he had threshed for fear the Midianites across the border would come in the night and steal it from him.

Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him, and said unto him, Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor.[3]

In later days, when the Israelites had become stronger and had impressed their importance upon the people round about, we still find that the wheat fields figure largely in the picture of their life. When the Philistines became superstitiously fearful of the Jehovah religion and sent back home the sacred ark which they had captured as a prize of war, it was from the wheat fields of Beth-Shemesh that the reapers looked up and saw it approaching in the distance.[4] When Solomon was bartering with King Hiram of Tyre for the lumber and artificers to build his magnificent Temple at Jerusalem, it was with twenty thousand measures of wheat that he paid a part of the bill.[5]

[1] Exod. xxxiv, 22, 26. This was called the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths, because during the feast the people camped out under the shelter of booths made of branches of trees.

[2] Judges xv. [3] Judges vi, 11, 12. [4] 1 Sam. vi, 13.

[5] 1 Kings v, 11. A *measure* is supposed to equal about one and a half pecks.

About two hundred years after Solomon's reign we find the fields again figuring very largely, but this time under quite different conditions. Certain men had become rich by getting hold of their neighbors' land and had created great estates for themselves by putting small homesteads together. Then they had moved into the city to live a life of luxury upon the rentals they exacted from the peasant farmers. These rich landlords were not very particular how they obtained their possessions, whether by fair means or by foul. The prophet Micah says that they coveted fields and then seized them, lying awake nights to devise means of accomplishing their designs.[1] Isaiah breaks out with an invective against the greedy real-estate sharks who allowed the owners of small farms no alternative but to meet hard terms or die.

> Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room, and ye be made to dwell alone in the midst of the land![2]

This was much like the condition of things in our own country not many years ago, when in certain sections of the West the big ranchmen had everything so much their own way that a small owner had no chance for a livelihood. For miles and miles there were no dwellings save the ranch house of the one great cattle king. It was quite easy to remove fences in such a lonely stretch of land and there was much complaint that these big ranchmen included free government land within their own boundaries. Over in Palestine real fences are unknown. A man's land is sometimes enclosed by a loose stone wall, but a furrow

[1] Mic. ii, 1, 2. [2] Isa. v, 8.

made by a plow with stones placed at intervals is the ancient custom of marking the limits of a farm. Some of the owners of real estate were so grasping that, when the laws in Deuteronomy were made, one seems to have been framed especially for them:

> Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark.[1]

At the time of the prophets we find avarice so rampant that speculations in the wheat market had become very fascinating to the greedy merchants. They could scarcely wait for the Sabbath day to be over or the monthly religious feast to be completed, before they should open up trade again and "set forth the wheat." And they knew how to get the best of the purchaser, too, by using a small bushel or false balances and by charging a large price. They even sold refuse wheat to the poor as if it were good wheat. The prophet Amos draws this picture very vividly!

> Hear this, O ye that would swallow up the needy, and cause the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell grain? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and dealing falsely with balances of deceit; that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, and sell the refuse of the wheat?[2]

When Job, the Man of Affliction, was enduring his deep distress, and his four philosopher friends were trying to think up some good reason for all his trouble, one of them declared that he had found the reason in the fact that Job in his prosperous days had not cared how he obtained his riches and had cheated the small homesteader and swallowed up his substance; they said that all of Job's afflictions were a just punishment for this.

[1] Deut. xxvii, 17. [2] Amos viii, 4–6.

He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again;
He shall not look upon the rivers,
The flowing streams of honey and butter.
That which he labored for shall he restore, and shall not swallow it down;
According to the substance that he hath gotten, he shall not rejoice.
For he hath oppressed and forsaken the poor;
He hath violently taken away a house which he builded not.
Because he knew no quietness in his greed
He shall not save aught of that wherein he delighteth.
There was nothing left that he devoured not;
Therefore his prosperity shall not endure.
In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits:
The hand of every one that is in misery shall come upon him.
When he is about to fill his belly, God will cast the fierceness of his wrath upon him,
And will rain it upon him while he is eating.
The increase of his house shall depart:
His goods shall flow away in the day of his wrath.
This is the portion of a wicked man from God,
And the heritage appointed unto him by God.[1]

But Job knew these were false charges. After listening to all that his friends had to say he finally arose and vindicated himself. With a clear conscience and with righteous indignation at such unkind aspersions, he poured out his eloquent "Oath of Clearing."

If I have walked with falsehood,
And my foot hath hasted to deceit:
Then let me sow, and let another eat;
Yea, let the produce of my field be rooted out.
If I have withheld the poor from their desire,
Or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail,
Or have eaten my morsel alone,

[1] Job xx, 15 ff., American Revised Version, with marginal readings.

And the fatherless hath not eaten thereof;
If I have seen any perish for want of clothing,
Or that the needy had no covering;
If his loins have not blessed me,
And if he hath not been warmed with the fleece of my sheep:
Then let my shoulder fall from the shoulder-blade,
And mine arm be broken from the bone.
If I have made gold my hope,
And have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence;
If I have rejoiced because my wealth was great,
And because my hand had gotten much;
If my land crieth out against me,
And the furrows thereof weep together;
If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money,
Or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life:
Let thistles grow instead of wheat,
And cockle instead of barley.[1]

If there was one man like Job, however, there were doubtless many like those depicted by Zophar, Job's pretended friend. Cheating in lands and markets was such a common practice that no one believed a truly honest man existed. Ezekiel tells us that even the women were guilty of selling their souls for handfuls of barley, or what was the same thing, of making it easy for their husbands to be dishonest.

Woe to the women that sew pillows upon all elbows, and make kerchiefs for the head of persons of every stature to hunt souls! And ye have profaned me among my people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not die.[2]

Lack of prosperity, it is true, was sometimes due to the utter shiftlessness of the peasant people. Especially was this the case after their return from the captivity in Babylon,

[1] Job xxxi, 5 ff. [2] Ezek. xiii, 18 f.

when they were trying under most discouraging conditions to get the land back into their hands and make it amount to something. It was uphill work and too disheartening for many a farmer. The prophet Haggai scolds the people roundly for sinking back into shiftless indifference.

Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.[1]

In spite of all this, however, the common people still kept on tilling the soil. Notwithstanding the injustice of man and the cruel failures of crops, they instinctively turned to the great Creator as the giver of rain and sunshine and the blessed harvest.

Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in Jehovah your God; for he giveth you the former rain in just measure, and he causeth to come down for you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain, in the first month. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil. And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the canker-worm, and the caterpillar, and the palmer-worm, my great army which I sent among you. And ye shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and shall praise the name of Jehovah your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you.[2]

The background for many of the soul-stirring messages of the prophets was without question an agricultural community earning a living from the soil. The very vices of the city were dependent upon the wealth wrung from the land. If the crops failed for whatever cause—a scourge of grasshoppers, or lack of rain, or the heartless oppression of the landlord—it brought disaster upon the whole country.

[1] Hag. i, 5, 6. [2] Joel ii, 23 ff.

Indeed, one of the finest expressions of faith in God which the Old Testament contains is the poem found in the Book of Habakkuk, where the prophet, after struggling through deep skepticism because of the injustice and undeserved hardships which he sees his people bearing, gets such a vision of God's eternal care for his children that he sings triumphantly:

> For though the fig-tree shall not flourish,
> Neither shall fruit be in the vines;
> The labor of the olive shall fail,
> And the fields shall yield no food;
> The flock shall be cut off from the fold,
> And there shall be no herd in the stalls:
> Yet I will rejoice in Jehovah,
> I will joy in the God of my salvation.[1]

It seems very strange to us living in America in the twentieth century that a country so evidently dependent upon agriculture for all its prosperity should have progressed in the science of farming so little as Palestine has done. There is scarcely another place on the globe where one may find farming customs dating back practically unchanged for at least twenty-five hundred years. The fellahin, or peasants, of to-day employ the methods used at the time of the prophets. Wheat and barley are still the common grains. In Old Testament times the poor lived almost exclusively upon bread made of barley mixed with a little wheat. There is also a kind of millet, but no oats or hay. Winter wheat is sown, as with us, after the heavy rains of the fall, "when the thirst of the land is quenched." Barley is sown a little later. The farmer loads a donkey

[1] Some think iii written later than i and ii, but the lesson is the same.

with the seed-bags and plow and starts with his men for the field. When they have arrived, the donkey is unloaded and turned loose to browse. The men get ready for their task by throwing off their outer garment and tucking their skirts into their belts. Then one man goes ahead sowing the grain and another follows with the plow fastened to a donkey, horse, or camel brought to the field especially to drag the plow. If the farmer is well-to-do, a yoke of oxen is used. The plow is of wood shod with iron, and only scratches up the surface of the ground, turning the seed under. If the hillside is too steep for the plow to reach all its nooks, a man follows with a pickaxe to stir up the soil not reached by the plow. After such preparation the seed is supposed to find lodgement and grow, without the use of fertilizer.

After the spring rains and mists, harvest time begins. Everybody now camps out in the fields, women and children as well as men. It is a time of happy work and singing. Some one has to sleep in the fields, for the harvest is coveted by the Arabs just as Gideon's grain was coveted by the Midianites. The reaper uses a sickle, ties up each bunch of grain with straw and makes a shock, much as was done in the days of our grandfathers, before harvesting machines were invented. If the reaper is a man, he uses a sheepskin apron and a large glove, but if a woman, as often happens, neither is provided. As in Ruth's day, poor women and girls are permitted to follow the reapers and glean what falls to the ground.

Finally the shocks are loaded on the backs of donkeys, mules, or camels, and carried to the threshing floor. This is a smooth piece of ground, beaten hard, and sometimes having a rock foundation. Each family has a separate pile

of grain on this floor. Before the threshing can begin, the tax collector appears and chooses out his bundle from each pile. This has to be threshed first and the grain delivered to him, before matters can proceed. The right to collect these taxes, or tithes, is given to the highest bidder. To thresh the piles of grain, animals shod with sheet-iron shoes are driven around and around upon them, their hoofs beating out the kernels. Sometimes a sledge with heavy iron teeth is driven over the wheat. When this process has been carried on long enough, the resulting mixture of chaff and grain must be winnowed. This is done by tossing it into the air with a wooden fork, or "fan." This custom is the basis of the poetical comparison in the first Psalm; wicked people are there likened to "the chaff which the wind driveth away." As the heavy grain falls on the floor, the women gather it up and sift it through different grades of sieves, after which the men put it into sacks.

Thus the farming of to-day in Palestine is much as it was in Isaiah's time twenty-six hundred years ago. No greater contrast to the science of farming as practiced in America could anywhere be seen.

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR THE TEACHER OR CLASS

For a description of farming in Palestine, see

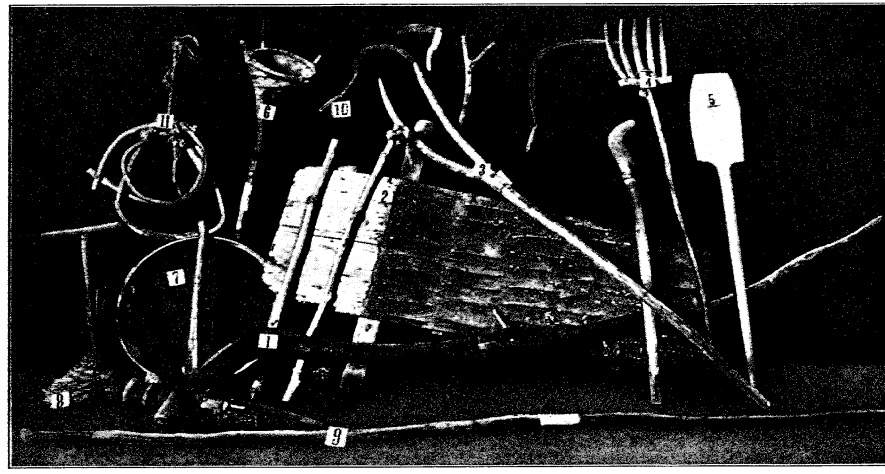
GRANT. The Peasantry of Palestine.

WHITNEY, J. D. "Village Life in the Holy Land," in the *National Geographic Magazine*, March, 1914. (Beautifully illustrated.)

KALEEL, MOUSA J. When I was a Boy in Palestine, pp. 139–142. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Company. 60 cents.

For a comparison of the Hebrews with the Greeks, see

FOWLER. History of the Literature of Ancient Israel, pp. 167, 168, 268.



PALESTINIAN AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS

1. plow: 2, threshing sledge: 3 and 4. grain forks: 5, winnowing shovel or fan: 6. tube for sowing seed: 7. grain sieve: 8. dung catcher: 9, goad: 10, sickle: 11, yokes. (From the Museum of Hartford Theological Seminary)

SELECTION XVI. THE POEM OF THE FARMER

Isa. xxviii, 23–29.

It was one of Israel's great crises with her enemies which is represented in this twenty-eighth chapter of the Book of Isaiah. In order to bring the counselors of the king back to their senses, a poem of the farm is introduced to prove that, just as farmers obey the laws of nature in plowing and sowing and harvesting, so God is a God of law and order, of cause and effect, everywhere, and that wrongdoing and foolish advice will lead to ruin in the councils of a nation just as surely as on the farm. In this poem the first stanza describes how plowing and sowing and harvesting follow each other in orderly succession; the second describes how different kinds of grain are treated differently in threshing.

Listen, and hear my voice,
Give heed and hear my word;
Is the plowman ever plowing?
Is he ever breaking up and harrowing his ground?
Does he not, when he has leveled its surface,
Scatter fennel and sow cummin[1]
And plant there wheat and barley,
And spelt[2] as its border?

[1] The seed of the cummin is used as a spice mixed with bread and boiled in stews. The black seeds of the fennel flower, or fitch, are used as a condiment. They are hot to the taste and are sprinkled thickly over flat cakes before they are baked, much as we use caraway seed (Tristram).

[2] Spelt is one of the ordinary cereals of the East and closely resembles wheat, but has a coarser and rougher sheath and a longer beard.

For Jehovah hath taught him the right way;
It is his God who has instructed him.
For fennel is not threshed with sledges,
Nor is a cart wheel rolled over cummin,
But fennel is threshed with a staff,
And cummin with the flail.[1]
Is grain for bread crushed to pieces?
Nay, one does not thresh it forever,
But when he has driven his cart wheel over it,
He spreads it out so that it is not crushed fine.
This also proceeds from Jehovah of hosts.
Wonderful counsel, great wisdom hath he.[2]

Hebrew literature is not the only literature in which we find religion and labor wedded in practice and in preaching. In the story "Lorna Doone" we find a charming description of the beginning of the harvest. John Ridd, the farmer, is telling the tale: how all the parish had gathered with their sickles in his yard (for it was his turn to open the harvest season); how the procession of harvesters started for the field in proper order — the parson in the lead, wearing his gown and cassock, with the parish Bible in his hand and a sickle strapped behind him; how before they began to put their sickles to the wheat the parson first read some verses from the Bible and then laid the Bible down and "despite his gown and cassock, three good swipes he cut"; and then how the owner of the field followed, saying, "Thank the Lord for all His mercies

[1] The seeds of both cummin and fennel are very small and tender, and would be crushed beyond use if threshed like hard corn with a heavy roller, but cummin seed can easily be separated from its thin case by being beaten with a slender rod, while fennel seed is enclosed in a harder pod and requires a stouter staff to dislodge it (Tristram).

[2] Kent's translation.

and these the first fruits of His hand"; and finally how the clerk of the parish lined off a psalm, verse by verse, which they all sang, and then they fell to work. At evening, when they had wiped their sickles and hung them up, they came to the house for the harvest supper. The parson said the grace and helped to carve. After they had satisfied their "brave appetites" they lifted on high "a neck of corn, dressed with ribbons gaily, and set it upon the mantelpiece" and sang around it the Exmoor Harvest Song:

The wheat, oh the wheat, 't is the ripening of the wheat!
All the day it has been hanging down its heavy head,
Bowing over on our bosoms with a beard of red;
'T is the harvest and the value makes the labor sweet.

Chorus

The wheat, oh the wheat, and the golden, golden wheat!
Here 's to the wheat, with the loaves upon the board!
We 've been reaping all the day, and we never will be beat,
But fetch it all to mow-yard, and then we 'll thank the Lord.

This is a good example of an old English custom much like some of the ancient customs of the Hebrew people.

The only fragment of a rhymed song in the whole Old Testament has recently been discovered by scholars, in Hosea viii, 7. It is a very difficult passage to translate on account of the condition of the manuscript. Our older versions do not give the poetry of it. Probably it ran somewhat like this:

A cornstalk all yellow
Brings no meal to a fellow;
But if grains should bend it,
The wild ox would end it.

This must have been an old proverb of the farmer.

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR THE TEACHER OR CLASS

For comments on Isaiah xxviii, 23–29, see

International Critical Commentary, "Isaiah."
Students' Old Testament: "Sermons, Epistles and Apocalypses of the Prophets."
The Bible for Home and School: "Isaiah."
DRIVER. Isaiah: his Life and Times, pp. 52, 53.
SMITH. Isaiah, Vol. I, chap. viii, sec. 4, "God's Commonplace."

For cummin, fennel, spelt, wheat, barley, etc., see

TRISTRAM. Natural History of the Bible.
Bible dictionaries.

For comparison with harvest customs described in English literature, see

BLACKMORE, R. D. Lorna Doone, Vol. I, chap. xxix. (The Exmoor Harvest Song is given here in full.)

For the rhymed translation of Hosea viii, 7, see

DUHM, BERNHARD. The Twelve Prophets, p. 99. The Macmillan Company, New York. $1.25.

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SELECTION XVII. THE FIELDS OF BETHLEHEM AND THE STORY OF RUTH

The Book of Ruth

And it came to pass in the days when the judges judged, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelt there about ten years. And Mahlon and Chilion died both of them; and the woman was left of her two children and of her husband.

Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that Jehovah had visited his people in giving them bread. And she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each of you to her mother's house: Jehovah deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead and with me. Jehovah grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voice, and wept. And they said unto her, Nay, but we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should

even have a husband to-night, and should also bear sons; would ye therefore tarry till they were grown? would ye therefore stay from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes, for the hand of Jehovah is gone forth against me. And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her.

And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her god: return thou after thy sister-in-law. And Ruth said,

Entreat me not to leave thee,
Or to return from following after thee;
For whither thou goest, I will go;
And where thou lodgest, I will lodge;
Thy people shall be my people,
And thy God, my God;
Where thou diest, will I die,
And there will I be buried;
The Lord do so to me,
And more also,
If aught but death part thee and me.

And when she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, she left off speaking unto her.

So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and the women said, Is this Naomi? And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi,[1] call me Mara[2]; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and Jehovah hath brought me home again empty; why call ye me Naomi, seeing Jehovah hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, who returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz. And

[1] That is, "pleasant." [2] That is, "bitter."

Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. And she went, and came and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on the portion of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech. And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, Jehovah be with you. And they answered him, Jehovah bless thee. Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: and she said, Let me glean, I pray you, and gather after the reapers among the sheaves. So she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, save that she tarried a little in the house.

Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither pass from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens. Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn. Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found favor in thy sight, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a foreigner? And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thy husband; and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people that thou knewest not heretofore. Jehovah recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of Jehovah, the God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to take refuge. Then she said, Let me find favor in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken kindly unto thy handmaid, though I be not as one of thy handmaidens.

And at meal-time Boaz said unto her, Come hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers; and they reached her parched grain, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left thereof. And when she was risen up to glean,

Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not. And also pull out some for her from the bundles, and leave it, and let her glean, and rebuke her not.

So she gleaned in the field until even; and she beat out that which she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. And she took it up, and went into the city; and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth and gave to her that which she had left after she was sufficed. And her mother-in-law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to-day? and where hast thou wrought? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she showed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to-day is Boaz. And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, Blessed be he of Jehovah, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is nigh of kin unto us, one of our near kinsmen. And Ruth the Moabitess said, Yea, he said unto me, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest. And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, and that they meet thee not in any other field. So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz, to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.

Goethe said that the Book of Ruth is the loveliest little idyl which has come down to us through the ages. It has received praise from all students of literature because it is so simple and sincere, with the quaint background of long ago, and the sweetness of an unaffected country romance. There is no art for art's sake in this little masterpiece, and yet it is one of the most truly artistic bits of literature that can be found anywhere, one of the best told and most beautiful stories in all the world. Three figures stand out conspicuously in the book — Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz: Naomi, the older woman, bearing the scars of many hard and sad experiences in life; Ruth, the young woman,

hopeful, cheerful, loving, and faithful; and Boaz, well-to-do, but unspoiled, large-hearted, and thoughtful for others. Of course Ruth is the central figure. Thomas Hood, the English poet, wrote a poem about her, beginning thus:

> She stood breast high amid the corn,
> Clasped by the golden light of morn,
> Like the sweetheart of the sun,
> Who many a glowing kiss had won.

True it is that Ruth has been the sweetheart of Bible lovers. The whole story is established forever in the hearts of all who love nobility and romance.

There are two themes which underlie this story. When one reaches the close of the book and reads that Ruth was the great-grandmother of David, a real purpose for the story appears. At a later time in Jewish history great stress was laid upon the Hebrew marriage law commanding all true Hebrews to marry into their own race. Men who had married foreign wives were even asked to divorce them, although they might have happy homes. Many men objected to such strictness and, of course, if they could show that their most honored and beloved hero, King David, had foreign blood in his veins, they had a strong argument on their side. But this object in the story is not so apparent to us, at our time, as the subordinate theme which comes out in the very beginning of the tale — Ruth's loyalty to the woman she loved better than any one else. "The warp and woof of the story is the friendship between two women, and the grand climax up to which all is working is the birth of a baby," [1] that baby of course being the grandfather of David. Some of David's finest traits

[1] Professor Moulton in "The Modern Reader's Bible."

have been traced to Ruth, as, for example, his loyal love for his friend Jonathan, and the rich vein of poetic feeling that comes out in the earliest Psalms which are attributed to him.

> The fountains of Hebraic song
> Are in thy heart, fair Ruth,
> Fountains whose tides are deep and strong
> In deathless love and truth.[1]

The fitting background for such a beautiful pastoral as this charming story of Ruth is Bethlehem, one of the most noted and most frequently visited places in Palestine. It lies five miles south of Jerusalem and was the home of David's boyhood and the birthplace of Jesus. The name *Bethlehem* means "place of bread." Except in favored spots, the Judean plateau is rugged and waterless. The farmers raise their crops in the valleys between the ridges, where the fields spread out to some extent and where springs are to be found. Of all the sites in Judea for a good farm Bethlehem is the best. It is on the top of the plateau which rises from the low hills on the west and descends very rapidly to the rough wilderness on the east which borders the Dead Sea. On either side there are deep valleys with steep, rocky sides, but here the hills are rounded, the valley is shallow, and there is plenty of room for wheat fields. Near by is an ever-running brook along which the most luscious fruit is grown. Here are the famous Gardens and Pools of Solomon. Here, too, some of the finest honey in the world is made, the bees finding a harvest in these fragrant meadows and giving Palestine the reputation of being "a land flowing with milk and honey." Bee culture was doubtless known here in very

[1] See Essay on Ruth in "The Bible as Literature."

ancient times, for in the Love Song of Solomon, where his Pleasure Gardens make the scenery of the poem, he sings,

> Thy lips, O my bride, drop as the honeycomb:
> Honey and milk are under thy tongue.[1]

This spot is called "a little paradise" and is a most appropriate setting for the verse,

> Rise up,
> My love,
> My fair one,
> And come away,
> For lo, the winter is past.
> The rain is over and gone;
> The flowers appear on the earth;
> The time of the singing of birds is come,
> And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
> The fig tree ripeneth her green figs,
> And the vines are in blossom,
> They give forth their fragrance.[2]

It is about a half hour's walk from these Gardens of Solomon to the fields of Bethlehem where Solomon's rustic ancestors, Ruth and Boaz, carried on their courtship. Boaz was one of the well-to-do farmers of this valley, and it was probably in the month of May that he was harvesting his grain, for in Palestine wheat is sown in the fall, as is our winter wheat, and matures very quickly after the spring rains. The Psalmist tries to show God's loving desire for his people in the following verse:

> He would feed them also with the finest of the wheat;
> And with honey out of the rock would he satisfy them.[3]

[1] Song of Songs iv, 11.

[2] Song of Songs ii, 10–13, Moulton's arrangement.

[3] Ps. lxxxi, 16, American Revised Version, with Briggs's change in the pronouns.

Surely the writer of this out-of-doors story of Ruth shows how a simple, loyal, country maiden was rewarded for her faithful love.

The first part of the story tells how Ruth, the Moabitess, a woman of an alien race, came to make her home in Bethlehem and to become the ancestress of David. Bethlehem was Naomi's home, but even here in this comparatively fertile spot sometimes the drought, which is Palestine's worst enemy, would continue for so long a time that poor people, with their very primitive methods of farming, could not find enough to eat. Then it was that, time and time again, the Israelites were tempted to leave their native land and seek other homes, where the pasture would be more abundant and there would be bread enough for the children. Moab, the land east of Jordan, was always considered one of the best pasture grounds, and Naomi and her husband had migrated thither to bring up their family. Here they had lived ten years, and the two boys had grown up and married, when great sorrow came to the home. The husband and sons all died, and of course the natural thing for Naomi to do was to go back to her relatives in Bethlehem. Ruth's reply to Naomi when she was starting out on her journey home has become justly famous. It is true poetry, a "musical entreaty" cast in verse form. The whole book is a prose poem, but here the story breaks into rhythm.

Entreat me not to leave thee,
Or to return from following after thee;
For whither thou goest, I will go;
And where thou lodgest, I will lodge;
Thy people shall be my people,
And thy God, my God;

Where thou diest, will I die,
And there will I be buried;
The Lord do so to me,
And more also,
If aught but death part thee and me.

These immortal words were perhaps the nucleus of the tale, sung over and over by one generation to the next, until some gifted writer imbedded it in enduring literature. It has now become one of two classic expressions of loyal attachment, the other being David's Lament over Jonathan,[1] who, we are told, loved David "as his own soul."[2]

The scene in the wheat fields where Ruth ventures forth as a gleaner, according to the custom of the times, is so nearly like the very scenes in that vicinity to-day, that travelers have almost felt they have met Ruth and Boaz themselves. If one happens to come into a wheat field at mealtime he is likely to be invited to sit down with the farmer under a booth made of branches, while the farmer's wife and children prepare and serve what to us seems much like a picnic lunch. A wild pigeon cooked on a stick over a fire of twigs will perhaps be the *pièce de résistance*. But "the out-of-door luxury" of Palestine is parched wheat — sure to be a part of the menu. The children are sent to the field to gather some of the finest heads of the grain. The mother takes them and, placing them upon a few wisps of straw, reaches for a live coal from the fire, with which she lights the straw. The blaze sets fire to the hairs and hulls of the wheat and parches the kernels. The hot heads of grain are then rubbed in the hand until the blackened kernels are released from the stalk, and then the hostess

[1] 2 Sam. i, 17–27. [2] 1 Sam. xviii, 1.

passes these kernels to her guest on a wicker plate. Such a meal was probably much like that of Ruth in the fields of Boaz, when "she sat beside the reapers and they reached her parched grain, and she did eat and was sufficed." [1]

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR THE TEACHER OR CLASS

For estimates of the Book of Ruth, see

McFADYEN. An Introduction to the Old Testament. A. C. Armstrong & Son, New York. $1.50.

FOWLER. History of the Literature of Ancient Israel.

JESSUP, A. E., and CANBY, H. S. Book of the Short Story, introduction, p. 4. D. Appleton and Company, New York. $1.10.

MOULTON. Modern Reader's Bible: "Biblical Idyls."

The Bible as Literature, essay v, "Ruth and Esther."

For a description of Bethlehem and the country around it, see

BALDENSPERGER. The Immovable East, chap. v, "The Gardens of Solomon."

Bible dictionaries.

For bee-keeping in Palestine, see

BALDENSPERGER. The Immovable East, introduction and chap. v, "The Gardens of Solomon."

For parching wheat and for other customs mentioned in Ruth, see

HUNTINGTON. Palestine and its Transformation, p. 142.

GRANT. The Peasantry of Palestine, p. 86.

KALEEL. When I was a Boy in Palestine, pp. 139–142.

WHITNEY. "Village Life in the Holy Land," in the *National Geographic Magazine*, March, 1914.

Bible dictionaries, arts. "Parched Wheat" and "Food."

[1] Ruth ii, 14.

SELECTION XVIII. THE SONG OF THE VINEYARD

Isa. v, 1–7

Every nation has its early poetry. The poetic instinct seems born in men, for they must sing at their work, and at their play, and even when they fight. So we find harvest songs, hunting songs, and battle songs in early literature. Primitive people seem to have been able to do everything better to music. To its rhythm they could march in better step, they could swing their sickles more regularly and tread the grapes more joyously. It is true that the great hymn book of the Hebrews, our Book of Psalms, is made up of songs which were used in worship, but this collection was not made until comparatively late in their history. Sprinkled throughout the Old Testament we find remains of an old folk poetry — labor songs, dirges over the dead, wedding songs, and snatches of popular poetry sung in the streets — which make it clear that Hebrew literature, like every other great literature, was born from a feeling for the rhythms of life. Here fact and fancy, the real and the ideal, activity and repose, righteousness and peace, kiss each other and become friends, even as the Old Testament itself rhythmically and poetically expresses this deep truth of human nature.[1] The moment a literature lapses into a purely didactic expression, an utterly prosaic style, that moment it ceases

[1] Ps. lxxxv, 10.

to be great, because it is untrue to life, and because it has lost its appeal to human beings created upon the rhythmic plan. The life of ancient peoples may seem slow to us who live so fast, but it certainly was not dull or monotonous to them when, for the very joy of living, they sang at work and play. Hebrew literature is great literature and will never lose its appeal, because it is primarily poetic, not prosaic. In our older versions of the Bible the poetic quality has been largely obscured by the way the translations were printed. Now scholars translate so much more accurately that the fragments of old folk songs imbedded in various books, as well as the one long and complete collection of hymns, are printed as poetry.

Of all the labor songs presented to us in the Old Testament, those which were sung in the vineyards and at the grape festivals seem to have been the most popular. Even to-day this is the happiest time of the year among the peasant people, and joyful choruses ring out over the terraced hillsides as the laborers gather the fruit of the vine. Isaiah's Song of the Vineyard is doubtless based upon this type of folk song.

To understand the allusions in Isaiah's poem we need to know something concerning the way they planted vineyards in those days. Grape raising was in ancient times, and still is, one of the most important of the industries of Palestine. Many varieties of luscious grapes are cultivated; one greenish-white grape measures from one half to two thirds of an inch in diameter; another, olive-shaped and white, resembles the Malaga grape; another is dark purple and of the size of a small prune; there is a variety similar to the Black Hamburg; another kind, with

a green rind, is striped with red, with a pulp almost as firm as that of an apple; another resembles the famous Zante currant and still another the Isabella grape — and all this variety does not exhaust the shapes, sizes, and flavors. To-day the finest grapes to be bought in Jerusalem come from near Hebron, and remind one of the story of the grapes of Eshcol in the Book of Numbers. Grapes are eaten very freely during August, September, and October, and even up to December. The price is a cent a pound when cheap, gradually creeping up to as much as six cents.

Vineyards flourish best on terraced hillsides, and therefore are especially adapted to Palestine. They are found on the Judean hills and on the slopes of Mount Carmel and the Lebanons and over the rolling country of Samaria. They do very well without rain, especially if there is a good subsoil. They are cultivated in a variety of ways. Sometimes the vines are trained over a trellis or made to climb a tree; sometimes they are fastened to stakes about the height of a man, the branches spreading out laterally and forming festoons; but more often the stem trails on the surface of the soil, and the cluster-bearing branches are supported by forked sticks sufficiently to keep them off the ground. Of course in this rocky country the land for a vineyard has first to be cleared of stones; after the planting, a fence or hedge of some sort must be placed around the vineyard, and a watchtower erected to keep off wild animals and thieves. Sometimes, to frighten away the animals, a large stone three or four feet high is set up and whitewashed at the top so that it can be seen at night. The watchman often places a thin row of fine stones along the top of his wall in such a way that a thief would rattle them down

and waken him in the night. A wine vat, or press, is dug out of the hard soil or excavated in the rock. There the juice of the ripe grapes is trodden out to be made into wine. Of course this stains the clothes of the workmen. There are numerous references in the Old Testament to this treading of the wine press. One of the most graphic is in the sixty-third chapter of Isaiah, where the prophet sees the Man of Vengeance coming to save the people from injustice.

Who is this that cometh from Edom, with crimsoned garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength?

I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat?

I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the peoples there was no man with me: yea, I trod them in mine anger, and trampled them in my wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment.[1]

The season at the wine-making is one of great joy. It begins in some places as early as July, but the most of the grapes are fully ripe in August and September; the peasants use the expression "In Grapes" for the month of August. Booths of boughs are then built within the vineyards for the workmen to sleep in, and whole families go to the vineyards to live. There is constant singing and shouting, and this season is the happiest of the year.

It was probably at some great national feast-day at the close of the vintage season — very likely in Jerusalem, where the people from the country had gathered for the occasion — that Isaiah assumed the rôle of popular singer

[1] American Revised Version, with marginal reading.

in the street or market place, in order to attract the crowd and make them listen to his message of justice. Here he sang this Love Song of the Vineyard, and then pointed his moral. We must remember that his prophecies are almost without exception poems or poetic fragments. Isaiah has been classed with Dante and Shakespeare among the world's immortal poets.

A song will I sing of my friend,
A love-song touching his vineyard.

A vineyard belongs to my friend,
On a hill that is fruitful and sunny;
He digged it and cleared it of stones,
And planted there vines that are choice;
A tower he built in the midst,
And hewed out therein a wine-vat;
And he looked to find grapes that are good,
Alas! it bore grapes that are wild.

Ye, in Jerusalem dwelling,
And ye, who are freemen of Judah,
Judge ye, I pray, between me
And the vineyard which I have cherished.
What could have been done for my vineyard
That I had not done?
When I looked to find grapes that are good,
Why bore it grapes that are wild?

And now let me give you to know
What I purpose to do to my vineyard:
I will take away its hedge,
That it be eaten up.
I will break through its walls,
That it be trodden down;
Yea, I will make it a waste,
Neither pruned nor weeded;

It shall shoot up thorns and briers,
And the clouds will I enjoin that they rain not upon it.
For the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the house of Israel,
And the men of Judah his cherished plantation;
And he looked for justice, but behold! bloodshed,
For righteousness, and behold! an outcry.[1]

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR THE TEACHER OR CLASS

For folk songs, see

GORDON. The Poets of the Old Testament, chap. ii, "The Folk Poetry of Israel."

For interpretation and comments upon the Song of the Vineyard, see

FOWLER. History of the Literature of Ancient Israel.
GORDON. The Poets of the Old Testament.
The Bible for Home and School, "Isaiah."
Students' Old Testament: "Sermons, Epistles and Apocalypses of the Prophets."
DRIVER. Isaiah: his Life and Times, pp. 26, 27.
SMITH. Isaiah, Vol. I, chap. iii, "The Vineyard of the Lord."
International Critical Commentary, "Isaiah."

For vineyards and grape raising in Palestine, see

GRANT. The Peasantry of Palestine.
BALDENSPERGER. The Immovable East, p. 283.
TRISTRAM. Natural History of the Bible.
Bible dictionaries.

[1] Cheyne's translation, Polychrome Bible.

SELECTION XIX. THE SHEPHERD PSALM

Ps. xxiii (Ps. xxii, Douay)

Another Hebrew poem which has sunk so deep into the heart life of English-speaking people that it can never be forgotten is the twenty-third Psalm, or the twenty-second in the Douay version. There is a reason for this beyond the mere fact of its beautiful sentiment. It is great from the standpoint of religious feeling, but it is great also as lyric poetry. Lyric poetry is the short, passionate outburst of personal feeling in poetic form. Hebrew poetry found its best expression in the lyric, and there are no lyrics in the world's literature that surpass some of the Psalms. The twenty-third Psalm has been called "the sweetest of all the Psalms," and to many people it is so precious that should they lose all else in the Bible, — nay all else in literature, — they would cling to the twenty-third Psalm as worth more than volumes. The same thought has been expressed many times in other ways, but nowhere more simply and musically and nowhere with such beautiful imagery and such depth of feeling. For a poem to be remembered by the common folk and become immortal, not only among the literati but for the unlettered as well, it must be musical, and the twenty-third Psalm sings itself.

Dr. Van Dyke tells us that Hebrew poetry has three striking characteristics, a deep and genuine love of nature, a passionate sense of the beauty of holiness, and an intense

joy in God. The twenty-third Psalm embodies all three of these qualities. It is one of the most charming of pastorals and must have been written out of the heart experience of a true shepherd. We love to associate it with the Shepherd King of Israel. The first half fits in most perfectly with David's early life, and the latter half, which passes from the figure of the shepherd to that of a host entertaining his friend, fits in with some of David's experiences as king. The gifted musician who could play away the evil moods of King Saul would seem alone the rightful one to whom to attribute such power of throwing the magic spell over the whole heart-sick world. It is at any rate one of the very earliest of the Psalms and belongs to the Davidic collection. The best scholars think it must have been written in the days of the early monarchy,[1] because of its simplicity of diction and its reflection of the childlike faith of people living in the open.

To understand it completely, however, one should know something not only about the habits of the shepherds but also about the sheep of the East, for the East has always been the land of sheep. Sheep were of the greatest importance to the Israelites in the early days of their history, while they were strictly a pastoral people; and even down to the present day the raising of sheep is one of the main industries of Palestine, especially on the eastern plateaus, where the Bedouins drive their flocks over the fenceless fields wherever they can find pasture. This was the condition over the whole of Palestine in the days of the patriarchs, whose possessions were numbered by the sheep they

[1] Professor Briggs, in the International Critical Commentary, thinks it was written in Solomon's reign.

had, the number sometimes mounting into the thousands. Sheep may be counted by the thousands to-day over on the eastern plateau. It is an impressive sight in early spring, when the grass first shoots up in all its freshness, to see countless flocks stretching out for miles over the hills and valleys. The Bedouin tribes from far and near still gather in this locality, and their wealth in sheep seems boundless.

In olden times Abraham and Isaac were very rich men in the eyes of their neighbors — not because they had money, but because they owned so many flocks. Indeed sheep were then used in place of money. We read that the king of Moab at one time was obliged to pay the king of Israel an annual tribute of one hundred thousand lambs and the same number of rams.[1] Sheep have always been used for food; Solomon's household consumed one hundred a day. Amos complains that the pampered rich of his time would eat nothing but the lambs out of the flock, just as the epicure of our day demands sirloin steak or quail on toast. The milk is used to drink and for making butter and cheese. The skin is used for coats — a great protection against wind and rain — and for making bottles for all kinds of liquids. Wool has been one of the constant staples of trade in Palestine; it is spun and woven into cloth of all descriptions. The long, curved horns of the rams are used for trumpets, oil-flasks, and powderhorns. The sheep has always been the chief animal sacrificed to the gods. It is supposed that this originated not only from the idea of giving from one's possessions an offering to the deity but from the friendly communion of spirit which comes at a feast or meal; that is, it is the symbol not merely for sin

[1] 2 Kings iii, 4.

atoned for but also for friendly intercourse of soul between man and his god. The sheep seems to have been reserved for sacrifice, for special festivities, and for welcoming a friend or stranger as a guest. This is done to-day by Orientals, a lamb or calf being prepared as a delicacy, just as Abraham "ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dressed," and set it before the angels who visited him.[1] The butter mentioned here and elsewhere in the Old Testament was not like the hard butter we eat spread upon our bread, but is supposed to have been like that made in Palestine to-day. After the women have milked the sheep or goats, they put the milk into a goatskin bottle, which has clots of sour milk from a previous churning still adhering to its sides. Then the skin is hung upon a tripod of sticks and shaken vigorously back and forth until the butter "comes." When taken out of the skin, this butter is very white; the use of butter color is not yet fashionable in Palestine. It is now boiled and turned into what is known with us as clarified butter. This they use for cooking purposes, and it is much prized in the culinary arts of the East. They also use fresh butter, which is eaten mixed with sugar or honey or a kind of molasses made from grapes and is served in a bowl into which each person dips his piece of bread as he eats. When Isaiah tells of the butter and honey that shall form the staple food for every one left in the land, he is evidently speaking of this fresh butter mixed with honey, which was the food common to the poor who had only goat's milk and honey to depend upon.[2]

[1] Gen. xviii, 7, 8. See also 2 Sam. xii, 4. [2] Isa. vii, 15, 22.

The time of sheepshearing was one of great merry-making, celebrated by a special festival. There are various kinds of sheep raised in Palestine—fine, short-wooled breeds, somewhat like the Merino, and long, coarse-wooled varieties. The kind which has been there from very ancient times is the fat-tailed sheep, the immense tail containing often as much as ten pounds of fat. This is tried out, prepared with portions of the lean meat, and packed away for winter use. Sheep can find pasturage even in dry weather, and they yield milk longer and more abundantly than cows. They need to be watered but once a day.

The relation of a shepherd to his sheep is very intimate and tender. He always leads, never drives, them to pasture and water. At watering time the flocks of various shepherds all gather at the stream or spring, and each shepherd calls his own sheep by groups. As he draws the water for them and pours it into the troughs, they wait patiently until a particular group is called, then when that group is sent away, the next follows in orderly fashion; when the whole flock has been watered, the shepherd gives the signal, and all his flock rise and walk away, making place at the troughs for the sheep of the next shepherd. They are said never to make any mistake as to who calls them. Girls are often entrusted with the care of their father's flocks, and the watering troughs are often places for oriental courtships. It was at one of these wells that Jacob fell in love at first sight with Rachel[1] and that Moses first met his wife as she and her sisters "came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock."[2] The customs in courtship have not changed in all these years.

[1] Gen. xxix. [2] Exod. ii, 16.

The shepherd is most careful of the lambs. He can often be seen carrying a lamb under each arm and two or three more in the hood of his cloak, as he leads out his flock for the day. One of the familiar verses in Isaiah truly represents this.

> He will feed his flock like a shepherd,
> He will gather the lambs in his arm,
> And carry them in his bosom,
> And will gently lead those that have their young.[1]

So friendly is the shepherd with his sheep that they have the same kind of attachment for him as a dog has for his master in this country, and often the shepherds play with their sheep the way masters do with their dogs, making them run and gambol. Each sheep has a name, and when the shepherd calls one, it will answer with a bleat or come running up to him, expecting some fresh leaves or a choice morsel of bread from his hand. He often risks his life for his sheep when they stray away into the deep, dark ravines or up a craggy precipice, for they are constantly going astray. Isaiah knew their characteristics well when he said, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way."[2] In places where there are caves these are used as sheepcotes, but in the open fields sheepfolds are built, with a wall around them. On account of the prowling jackals and other wild beasts it is necessary for the shepherd to watch his flocks all night, and the venturesome traveler who climbs the Lebanons may see on the ground the shepherds' beds made of rushes, with sheepskins and rugs for covering, and near by a place for a fire,

[1] Isa. xl, 11. [2] Isa. liii, 6.

with pots and pans for cooking. This is like genuine camping out in our country with a hemlock bed for a mattress.

The Old Testament is full of figures of speech. The Hebrews could not think in abstract terms — their most profound thoughts about the meaning of life and the existence of God had to be expressed in concrete imagery. Here is a great contrast between the Greeks with their philosophy and the Hebrews with their religion. The Greeks loved to reason things out; the Hebrews did not stop to reason, they simply knew things by intuition, just as an Indian knows the path through the woods, or as a child knows that his mother loves him, or as the sheep knows his shepherd. And so the Hebrews expressed their deepest feelings about God and his care through symbols. Of all the symbols or figures of speech which are used in the Bible that of the sheep and the shepherd is the most frequent, being found as many as five hundred times. It was most natural, therefore, that at some time when the Psalmist felt especially helpless and bewildered along the path of life he should exclaim,

> The Lord is my Shepherd,
> I shall not want,

and then go on to think of the way the good shepherd found the greenest pastures for his sheep and led them up to the still pools where they could drink — for a dashing mountain brook is very turbulent. On the way when they were tired he let them lie down and rest, and when they went astray he found the right trail for them, just "for his name's sake"; that is, just because he was a shepherd. And when the path led through a deep, dark

ravine they were not afraid and did not run or bleat if they could see their shepherd ahead, for with his shepherd's crook he often lifted a lamb out of a pit and set him on his feet again, and with his big staff or club he could even knock down a bear. Then the Psalmist began to think of one day when he was a shepherd and had brought the sheep back to the fold at sunset and was preparing for the night. Before he lay down he looked out over the fields and saw a man running. He looked again and saw that there was no one with the stranger — that he was hurrying on alone. He knew what that meant: a man who had by mistake killed another was running away from his avenger to a city of refuge, where he might be safe.[1] It was the unwritten law of hospitality in such cases that the shepherd should share his tent at night, bring out the best of his flock and give the man a good meal, and send him on his way in the morning, asking no questions. If David wrote this Psalm, there was a time after he became king when he would have looked back to his shepherd's life and thought of all this — the time when he had to run away from Jerusalem over to that shepherd's country of Rabbah across the Jordan, not because he had killed another, but because his own son Absalom wanted to kill him and take the throne. We are told that, on this occasion, the Gileadite shepherds "brought beds, and basins, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and meal, and parched grain, and beans, and lentils, and parched pulse, and honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of the herd, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat: for they said, The people are hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness."[2]

[1] Num. xxxv, 9–12. [2] 2 Sam. xvii, 28, 29.

It was no wonder that after it was all over, the poet looked back upon such an experience and sang of the goodness and loving-kindness that had followed him all his days.[1] Whoever wrote the poem — whether it was David, or some one in Solomon's reign who had come very close to David's life experiences, or some other great poet of the open who himself had had just such experiences — it is one of the most beautiful lyrics we possess.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside still waters.[2]
He restoreth my soul.

He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,[3]
I will fear no evil; for thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou hast anointed my head with oil;
My cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and loving-kindness shall follow me all the days of my life;
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.[4]

[1] This interpretation of the second half of the Psalm, among the many that have been offered, seems to be that taken by the best scholars (see Professor Briggs in International Critical Commentary and Dr. G. A. Smith, Four Psalms). David may not have been the author, but for this view, see Dr. Stalker, Psalm of Psalms, introduction, and for 2 Sam. xvii, 28, 29, as a fitting background, see Barton, The Psalms and their Story.

[2] Or "waters of rest."

[3] Or "deep darkness."

[4] American Revised Version (with the exception of *the Lord* for *Jehovah*), and Briggs's arrangement.

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR THE TEACHER OR CLASS

For an estimate of and comments upon the twenty-third Psalm, see

VAN DYKE, HENRY. The Poetry of the Psalms. Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York. 50 cents.

STALKER, JAMES. The Psalm of Psalms. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 60 cents.

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